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ABSTRACT

**THE ROLE OF FACULTY FAMILIES IN NURTURING
SPIRITUAL SURROGACY ON THE MAPLEWOOD
ACADEMY CAMPUS**

by

Michael Jason Sayles

Adviser: Barry Gane

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: THE ROLE OF FACULTY FAMILIES IN NURTURING SPIRITUAL
SURROGACY ON THE MAPLEWOOD ACADEMY CAMPUS

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Name and degree of adviser: Barry Gane, Ph.D.

Date Completed: April 2011

Problem

During the principle and value setting years of adolescence, many Seventh-day Adventist teenagers are removed from their homes and placed in the dormitories of our boarding academies in an effort to cement their beliefs in the faith and provide safe Christian fellowship with fellow teenagers holding similar beliefs. Over the course of the next four years, the amount of time these youth spend with their parents is drastically reduced while their need for parental support and guidance still remains. The academy provides opportunity for an excellent education and strives to draw each student into a closer relationship with Christ and a clearer understanding of His character, yet there seems to be no intentional program in place specifically designed for providing a

mentoring relationship for the student in light of parental absence. This mentoring should not focus only on the spiritual life of the student nor only on their academic growth, but should strive to nurture all aspects of maturation including emotional and social development. The challenges that face today's youth emphasize the necessity of adult positive role models and intentional mentors to guide them through a world determined to destroy them. Thus one of the greatest programming needs on the Seventh-day Adventist boarding academy campus today is the need for mentoring programs designed specifically to bridge the gap between the student's need for parental involvement and the parents' limited ability to provide for those needs in light of the physical distance inherent to the boarding academy's nature.

Method

Staff who choose to work in a boarding academy setting face overwhelming schedules that include evening and weekend supervision, class sponsorships, religious activities, staff meetings, seasonal banquets, and constant awareness of student behaviors. Therefore the mentoring program developed on the Maplewood Academy campus incorporated the faculty family program already in practice. During the school year's pre-session, I presented a seminar explaining the different generations and the most effective means of reaching and mentoring each generation with adolescents comprising the main focus. Monthly meeting times for the faculty family program were scheduled and faculty were encouraged to meet with their faculty families outside of these scheduled time periods as well whenever possible. In an effort to determine which aspects of the program succeeded and which aspects merited further scrutiny, each faculty member and student were given a confidential survey at both the beginning and the end of the school

year. The results were then analyzed, suggesting areas of further program development for a more effective mentoring in the future.

Results

The surveys revealed that socialization was the most mentored activity followed by spirituality. Educational mentoring scored the lowest, which coincided with the general program expectations expressed on the initial survey. The surveys also indicated that those not wishing to participate in the program, whether they were students for whom involvement was mandatory or faculty who felt pressured to participate, hindered the success of their specific faculty family units. The students who were involved with their faculty parents more than once a month felt the most mentored and indicated the biggest changes in their lives.

Conclusions

This study illustrates the benefits of an intentional mentoring program for boarding academy students. While this specific study incorporated the mentoring program into the pre-existing faculty family program, the strongest drawback seemed to be the mandatory student involvement already established with the program and the perceived mandatory faculty involvement despite the express statements otherwise. This hesitant involvement resulted in students looking for a mentoring relationship with an uninterested faculty member or a faculty member striving to build a mentoring relationship with an uncooperative student.

This study also revealed the need for accountability on the part of both the faculty and the students so that those desiring mentoring relationships have the opportunity to

build those relationships. Participating faculty members must strive to host their faculty family units for every program event to foster continuity, trust and dependence.

Similarly, students must attend every event possible in order to show appreciation for the faculty members' efforts and to do their part in building an easy rapport with the faculty member and other unit members.

Finally, this study also revealed the necessity of presented very clear and precise expectations for the mentoring program, providing goals and checkpoints to guide both the faculty members and the students. These expectations range from the technical arena such as scheduling and developing events to the more abstract areas such as which interests to develop and how to focus energies into these areas. These improvements would greatly enhance the already effective mentoring program as developed on the Maplewood Academy campus.

Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

THE ROLE OF FACULTY FAMILIES IN NURTURING
SPIRITUAL SURROGACY ON THE MAPLEWOOD
ACADEMY CAMPUS

A Dissertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
Michael Jason Sayles

April 2011

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Project

Maplewood Academy is not unique in its role as a boarding institution. Students are separated from their parents during this time of intense searching for meaningful values in their lives and become spiritual orphans needing spiritual surrogates to fill the parental void. While there are many opportunities for interaction between the faculty and students which could be utilized to fill this void, often their interaction is confined to the classroom and supervision. This frequently leads to an attitude of 'them and us.' Consequently, very little mentoring is fostered in spite of the campus's ideal setting for spiritual surrogacy.

The task of this project is to implement a more intentional spiritual surrogacy between staff and students on the Maplewood Academy campus, utilizing 'faculty families' as the catalyst. Since all staff are included in this program yet the program bears the name 'faculty family,' all staff will be included in the term 'faculty' for the purpose of this paper. Faculty families are groups consisting of two faculty members and six to seven students who meet monthly for informal fellowship, presenting the ideal atmosphere for developing deeper relationships and more effective mentoring.

Justification for the Project

Students that board at an academy during the school year spend much of their value-developing years away from their parents' influence. During this critical time of faith development, youth need to be surrounded by godly influences provided by adults who are willing to fill the parental void and provide spiritual, emotional and practical guidance in their parents' absence, thus successfully building a beneficial mentoring relationship.

Generating an effective mentoring relationship requires investment in one another's lives. Spiritual surrogacy will not spontaneously develop between two individuals with very little interaction. Adults must strive to merge their lives with those of the youth, providing opportunity for strengthening inter-personal bonds, encouraging trust, and building Christian character. When faculty members choose employment at a boarding academy, their level of desired involvement with students outside of school hours is usually investigated during the interview process. However, specific expectations are not designated in a job description and hence faculty providing spiritual surrogacy is voluntary and optional. Yet experience has shown that most boarding academy faculty members choose their employment specifically for the opportunity to become deeply involved in the students' lives.

Each of us has been created with an individual uniqueness, yet we tend to share commonalities with others in our generation. This common ground simplifies our interaction with others our age, yet causes friction between the generations as they approach similar situations with differing perspectives. By recognizing how childhood circumstances necessitated the development of certain character traits, generations can

learn to appreciate each others' strengths and limitations, and develop methods of collaborating as a team. This intergenerational understanding facilitates a deeper development of a surrogacy relationship between two people of different ages who may otherwise be kept apart by generational misunderstandings and intolerance.

Due to modern technology, no longer is it necessary for people to gather for socializing, as telephones and instant messaging fit more conveniently in complex schedules. Community gatherings have been replaced by entertainment that now fits in the palm of one's hand. Yet God desires His people to fellowship with one another. Acts 2:47 states, "And each day the Lord added *to their fellowship* those who were being saved" (emphasis mine). Christians must find encouragement and strength in the church family, especially when they are young in the faith. How much more important is it, then, to include the youth in our fellowship, who are still developing not only their relationship with Christ, but also their moral characters, their belief structure and their life direction. It is also important to remember the benefits youth can bring to church fellowship. Teaching them truths refreshes our love for the truth, and their viewpoints shed new light on old stories. Adults benefit from the youths' acceptance, friendship and love just as surely as youth benefit from receiving the same from adults.

God desires to develop an intimate relationship with every individual, regardless of one's age, race, weaknesses, sins, or struggles (see John 3:16, 17; Rom 8:29). It is imperative that the body of Christ unifies not only to reach out to lost souls, but also to shield and nurture fellow Christians as Satan intensifies his attacks in these last days (see Rev 12:12). This is especially vital in the lives of the academy youth, whose parents are not able to fill this role. Hence, academy faculty are given the opportunity to step in as

spiritual surrogates and develop a mentoring relationship which has the potential, not only to enhance the lives of the youth, but to claim their souls for the kingdom and to prepare them for the work of the Lord.

Expectations from the Project

This project will increase the amount of casual interaction between students and faculty to encourage the development of closer relationships and provide opportunity for spiritual surrogacy and mentoring. Most significant conversations happen while casually interacting with students. Thus, it will supply time for faculty to be with students in casual settings to increase the number of opportunities for significant conversations.

This project will enable the author to acquire a deeper knowledge in the subject of generational barriers and help develop ways to bridge the 'generational gaps.' Through the research of others and through my own observations, I will be able to gain a broader knowledge of the subject and able to help make the changes that are necessary to improve the faculty family program.

This project will create more opportunities for youth to set aside their technological diversions and instead cultivate relationships within their own academic community by scheduling group activities with their fellow students that will interest and intrigue them. It will provide blocks of devoted time for the faculty family program, which is necessary for the proper growth and nurturing of mentoring relationships and will expose students to a variety of situations to broaden their scope of social comfort such as engaging in community service, visiting museums and also simply joining the family for dinner and participating in casual conversation. These blocks of time will often coincide with faculty members' previously scheduled supervision, but will require

personal investment as well which by nature requires that participation in the program remains voluntary.

This project will create a realization by the faculty of the great need for intentional interaction with the students on spiritual, emotional and social levels if the ultimate goal of solidifying them in the Spirit is to be reached. Without proper faculty investment, the program cannot be as successful. Persuading the entire faculty of the importance of full participation will greatly help to foster the spiritual growth of the student body and improve the effectiveness of the program.

This project will supply boarding academies with a training program to properly equip faculty for their most important role—leading youth into an acceptance of Christ as their Savior and teaching them to follow as the Lord leads.

Description of Maplewood Academy

“The roots of Maplewood Academy trace to 1888 when the Minnesota Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (SDA) opened the Minneapolis Preparatory School in the basement of the new Minneapolis SDA Church on the corner of 4th Avenue and Lake Street.” Since that time, it has grown from a preparatory school in a church basement to a co-educational high school serving the constituents of the Minnesota Conference. Maplewood Academy is now located in Hutchinson, Minnesota. One of the variances specific to this school is the weather, with long winters and cold temperatures forcing the students to spend most of the school year indoors. This factor requires creativity when planning community service projects and Sabbath afternoon activities. Also, Maplewood Academy was once on farmland at the edge of town. While the town has grown around it, the school still lies near the northern edge of town as Hutchinson

grew more southward. Still, the town has grown considerably since Maplewood's inception, now offering a variety of shopping and restaurant options as well as hosting more parks per capita than anywhere in the United States. The school's proximity to downtown Hutchinson allows for further student involvement in the community through such events as Praise in the Park held in downtown's Library Square and through community service opportunities such as cleaning parks and raking residents' yards. These opportunities strengthen the school's reputation in the community.

Maplewood Academy moved to its present location in 1904, at which time there were seven faculty members and fifty-seven students. The progressing years brought a great fluctuation in the number of students, with the enrollment at one point reaching over 300. The present enrollment is ninety-three students with nineteen faculty, two being task force workers. One peculiarity among the Maplewood faculty is their longevity. Aside from the task force positions which by nature engage an employee for only one year, the newest faculty member has been employed by Maplewood for three years while the longest tenure at present is forty-one years. This provides an authoritative consistency other academies do not enjoy. Maplewood also benefits from a faculty gender balance with ten females and nine males and a wide range of generational mix with faculty ages ranges from twenty six (Millennials) to sixty five (the Builder Generation.) This faculty generational interdependence reiterates the necessity of learning to work with other generation's strengths and weaknesses in order to maintain a solid cohesion and effectively minister to the students on campus.

The Hutchinson Seventh-day Adventist Church sits on the campus of Maplewood Academy which allows church members to become involved in academy life. Many

church members even participate in the faculty family program, allowing for smaller family groups and further involving the academy in community events. However, the addition of church members whose schedules differ from those of the faculty members adds communication difficulties, as does the further mixing of more intergenerational volunteers, many of whom have no formal training for work among the youth. This lack of formal training differs from the faculty in that teachers are necessarily trained in youth relationship dynamics as they are taught proper classroom management. The faculty whose expertise lies outside of the classroom spend a great deal of time among the youth and learn of their relationship dynamics through personal experience. Church members do not have this advantage, and thus may feel 'out of their element' among groups of youth or may make elementary mistakes as they develop relationships with the youth. Yet their desire to intercede in the lives of Millennials and potential lack of adequate training further emphasizes the need for mentoring training in conjunction with the faculty family program.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL INSIGHTS ON COMMUNITY AND MENTORING

The first source that should be considered when researching mentorship is, of course, the Holy Scriptures. Not surprisingly, the Bible provides many examples of mentoring relationships—some beneficial and some detrimental. The following references give insight into God’s original purpose when He designed this interdependence between the generations.

Psalms 145: Praising Together

Psalm 145 is the first of the triumphant hymns, and it relates the role one generation fills in teaching the following generations how to relate to their Creator. Verse 4 states, “One generation will commend Your works to another; they will tell of Your mighty acts.” This technique of repetitive praise played a vital role in the history of the Israelite nation. By such means, children were taught the glory, power and uniqueness of their God, and were thus encouraged to keep His covenants and remain faithful to Him despite the widespread worship of false gods in surrounding lands. As is stated in *Youth Mentoring* “Growing up is not an option.”¹ If the Israelites did not include all generations in praise and telling of God’s amazing acts to the next generation,

¹Patricia L. Fry, *Youth Mentoring: Sharing Your Gifts with the Future* (Liguori, MO: Liguori Publications, 2004), 39.

then the people of God would be only one generation away from extinction. All we have is what we can pass on to the next generation.

One example of such tactics can be found in Israel's response to the common rainbow. As its colors stretched across the horizon, the older generations would once again tell the story of Noah's ark and the flood that covered the entire world. God's faithfulness during this time of destruction would impress upon its hearers the assurance that His faithfulness would continue throughout the generations, as long as Israel remained faithful to God in the same manner as Noah and his family.

Another example of repetitive praise is the annual Passover celebration. During this time the older Israelite generations related the miraculous intervention of a mighty God who delivered His people from bondage, oppression, exploitation, and even murder at the hands of the Egyptians. God's sovereignty over a nation whose ruler believed himself to be a god would encourage the later generations as they faced enemy attacks that would outwardly seem impossible to resist.

Often tangible items were integrated into this repetitive praise to further impress the reality of the events. Only unleavened bread was used during the Passover celebration. The stones that lined Jacob's well told of God's mercy to the repentant. Tassels hung on Israelite clothing to commemorate the Ten Commandments. The Old Testament records many examples of God's charge to His people to teach the younger generations about His character, His love, His faithfulness, and His sovereignty.

One of the most interesting facets of Ps 145 is that it tells the purpose of this inter-generational mentoring. Verses 5 and 6 tell us that "they will speak of the glorious splendor of Your majesty, and I will meditate on Your wonderful works. They will tell

of the power of Your awesome works, and I will proclaim Your great deeds.” This excerpt exemplifies the connection between the actions of one generation with the actions of the next. If ‘they’ did not speak, then “I” would not respond. The power one generation holds over another is immeasurable. The choice of either immersing those who follow in the sense of God’s presence or depriving them of the knowledge of God entirely can determine eternal destinies.

King David of the scriptures emphasizes the importance of traditions, which is a form of mentoring, especially in relation to praising and worshipping God. His desire was for generational mentoring to continue until the Second Coming when all generations of Earth’s history could praise God in unison. Unfortunately the desire to mentor or to be mentored does not always accompany the action of mentoring or accepting guidance. Often adults are side-tracked by peripheral issues such as worship style not following the traditional format, while youth are often side-tracked when the worship style is traditional. This can lead to segregation during the very act of worship which God would utilize to unite His people. This segregation also leads to misunderstanding and resentment, barring healthy mentorship as the generations develop distrust for one another.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9: Teaching the Next Generation

God implemented a plan in Israel designed to avoid this segregation and the resulting mistrust. A passage known as the *Shema* would sound throughout Israel twice daily. Initially God identified Himself in this passage, and then defined the responsibility of His people in response to His authority. He continued with the command to lead the children in the paths of righteousness. Deuteronomy 6:4, 5 quotes the *Shema* beginning

with, “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.” This statement separated the God of Israel from the gods of surrounding nations—an imperative designation during a time when gods were as plentiful as towns and villages. Verse 5 continues, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.” This command left no room for loopholes or excuses. God expressed the duty of the Israelites in no uncertain terms, yet included at the onset the concept that He belonged to them. This would have made a deep impact on a people accustomed to the shame of slavery, giving them a pride and a sense of self-worth as they defined themselves according to their God. “Values are not truly values unless we firmly hold to them when it’s inconvenient, when other more pressing demands clamor for our attention.”² That is why God wants you to know who you are and to whom you belong. You cannot impress values onto a mentee that you do not truly hold dear yourself.

“Effective, life changing mentoring is a product of relationships and principles.”³ You can’t have one without the other. The *Shema* ends with God’s desire for His relationship with Israel to continue throughout the generations. Verse 6 implores, “These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.” The word *impress* is also translated “teach,” but more accurately “whet.” This brings the visual image of a sharpening knife.

You must sharpen one side and then turn it over and sharpen the other and keep repeating the process throughout your life. Just as a knife, once sharpened and used will

²David A. Stoddard, *The Heart of Mentoring* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2003), 128.

³Ibid., 41.

become dull again, so your teachings will fade in the memory of your children. It is imperative that children be taught God's Word by daily turning it over to look at it from various angles, refreshing their view continuously. In *The Miracles of Mentoring*, Thomas Dortch states that "simply by giving your time and attention to a young person, you pass on the values of social responsibility."⁴ You must not just be a teacher but must also be a living example if you truly want the next generation to pick up what you are teaching.

Deuteronomy 4:8 continues, "Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them to your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates." The Israelites took this literally and began wearing "phylacteries," which were pieces of leather that had God's word on them that had little boxes they would tie around their foreheads. Of course, God desires more than merely a literal translation of this command. He desires to be involved in everything that we do. Not only do our words have an impact on those we mentor. But our actions even have a deeper effect. "Virtue is a mentor's most powerful tool."⁵ The mentee will pick up on your lifestyle way before they actually start listening to the words you are saying. Your lifestyle must be aligning with what you wish your mentor to be. Your life must support what you teach. In fact, you should be able to mentor without using words. That's why it is so important that in a mentoring relationship you "must be short on words and long on service."⁶ The way you live your life is what the mentee will pick up on the most. Actor Denzel Washington

⁴Thomas W. Dortch Jr., *The Miracles of Mentoring* (New York: Broadway Books, 2000), 150.

⁵Marsha Sinetar, *The Mentor's Spirit* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 27.

⁶Stoddard, 117.

experienced the benefit of a mentoring relationship in his own life, and collected the mentoring experiences of other celebrities in his book *A Hand to Guide Me*. In his testimony he states, “Train up a child in the way he should go . . . and watch what happens!”⁷

In Exod 18:21-23, God gives Moses a plan that could not take place but through mentoring, not just in the family circle, but to a wider context. Moses is getting overwhelmed with his job trying to do everything himself. God tells Moses to appoint able bodied men to take over some of the responsibilities. Now, this same problem can happen to us if we do not mentor. We get overwhelmed and look for some able bodied men and they are not there. Why? Because we have not trained them to take over. Unless we spend time mentoring how can we expect them to grow up ready for the job. God has given us the opportunity to mentor and we need to take it not just for the sake of the group but also for our sakes. If we do not mentor the following generation, they will be led to make the same mistakes that we did. Let us now take a look at other mentoring relationships in the bible and see what we can learn from them.

1 Samuel 3 and 8: Dangers of Mentoring

Mentoring can have both positive and negative effects. Consider, for example, the relationship between Samuel and Eli. None can deny that Eli was Samuel’s mentor. In fact, Samuel lived with Eli and rarely even saw his parents. This situation in the Scriptures most closely mirrors the circumstances of students at a boarding academy. While it is true that they are not as young as Samuel when his parents gave him to the

⁷Denzel Washington, *A Hand to Guide Me* (Des Moines, IA: Meredith Books, 2006), 272.

Lord, these students do spend an average of 226 days out of 365 days in a year away from their parents and on the academy campus. During this time of adolescence, the faculty become in a very real way their “surrogate parents,” or their parents away from home. The true concern is whether or not faculty adequately fill that role.

Let us look deeper at the relationship between Samuel and Eli. In 1 Sam 3, we read of God calling Samuel. He called Samuel three times during the night and each time Samuel ran to Eli thinking it was him. The third time Eli finally realized the truth. The Bible tells us in 1 Sam 3:8, 9, “Then Eli realized that the Lord was calling the boy. So, Eli told Samuel, ‘Go lie down, and if He calls you, say, “Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.”’” The scriptures tell us that God had not spoken in quite some time, which can account for the repetition necessary for Eli to finally understand that God Himself was calling Samuel. It is clear, however, that Eli had at one time heard God’s voice. This enabled him to recognize God’s voice, albeit belatedly, even when God spoke to another person.

Yet while Eli was able to redirect Samuel’s attention to God instead of himself, he unfortunately failed to consider his own devotion to God before accepting the role of Samuel’s mentor. David Stoddard says, “Look at yourself first. An important principle in mentoring is to have your own spiritual life in order.”⁸ If your own life is not interwoven with God, then you will be unable to provide spiritual direction to the next generation. Through that nighttime conversation between God and Samuel, it became clear that God was calling Samuel to replace Eli as high priest in due time. The Bible does not state the time frame between this encounter and the eventual death of Eli,

⁸Stoddard, 174.

however it does imply that a number of years passed. I can imagine as Samuel grew up that Eli spent extra time teaching him about God in light of the special role he was to fulfill as mediator for the nation of Israel before an almighty God, and perhaps due to his failure in impressing a reverence for God in his own two boys as revealed in God's message to him through Samuel. God is quoted in 1 Sam 3:12-13 as saying, "I am going to carry out all my threats against Eli and his family. I have warned him continually that judgment is coming for his family, because his sons are blaspheming God and he hasn't disciplined them." Ellen White further states in *Patriarchs and Prophets* page 573 that "Eli, pained by the waywardness of his own sons, found rest and comfort and blessing in the presence of his charge. It was not customary for the Levites to enter upon their peculiar services until they were twenty-five years of age, but Samuel had been an exception to this rule. Every year saw more important trusts committed to him; and while he was yet a child, a linen ephod was placed upon him as a token of his consecration to the work of the sanctuary."⁹ This seems to indicate that Eli invested the vast majority of his energies into Samuel's upbringing. Jean Rhodes states that "mentors who have only one protégé sometimes throw themselves into their relationship with this particular young person."¹⁰

In contrast to this intense devotion between Eli and Samuel, the Bible makes it clear that Eli did not teach his own sons about God. This is where mentoring, or lack thereof, can have a negative outcome which can prove spiritually detrimental and lead to unnecessary tragedy, as we see in 1 Samuel 4. This poor parenting style is reflected in

⁹Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1997), 573.

¹⁰Jean E. Rhodes, *Stand by Me* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 78.

Samuel years later, exemplifying the harsh reality that, while positive leadership qualities transferred from Eli to Samuel, so did the negative qualities. “A good sign that you’re having an effect on a child is when the child starts mimicking you,”¹¹ explains Patricia Fry. Samuel most definitely mimicked his mentor Eli, both in devotion for God and in neglect of his children which eventually led the nation of Israel to sin against God in their demand for a king in place of the wicked leadership of Samuel's wayward sons. First Samuel 8 makes this connection between cause and effect very clear. According to Scripture, his sons “turned aside after dishonest gain and accepted bribes and perverted justice” (1 Sam 8:11). Here we see that Samuel’s sons followed the same pursuits as Eli’s sons, exhibiting contempt for the commands of God and the holy nature of their high calling. Bayless Conley states, “The tragedy is that many times the exact same weaknesses and problems exist in the lives of those who mentored them.”¹² Thus, the generations that followed were affected by Eli’s mentoring of Samuel. In our mentoring we need to make certain that we are practicing what we preach. Our protégés will often learn more from our lives than our actual words. “Mentors are more than friends and confidants. We are also role models.”¹³

This story can discourage many who are considering involvement in a mentoring relationship. I don’t wish to discourage them from doing so, but all who wish to do so must first spend quality time on their knees discussing both the responsibilities and benefits with God. Only with great prayer and dedication will God enable us to truly

¹¹Patricia L. Fry, *Youth Mentoring: Sharing Your Gifts with the Future* (Liguori, MO: Liguori, 2004), 49.

¹²Bayless Conley, *The Miracle of Mentoring* (Tulsa, OK: Harrison House, 2001), 15.

¹³Fry, 95.

make a positive difference in the lives of these students and thus affect the future generations for eternity. “Without personal values, we’re going to be all over the map, driven and tossed by the wind.”¹⁴ Our personal values provide a foundation not only for our own decisions, but are also the primary traits developed by protégés. Students learn so much more from our actions and our interpersonal relationships than the words we speak. We must “examine our own lives and learn how we get out of balance.”¹⁵ Thus, when we know more about ourselves we can know how to better model the behavior that we wish our protégés to develop. While it is not possible to ensure mentors carefully consider their own ways before embarking in a mentoring relationship, this need is addressed in the mentoring seminar presented before the beginning of the faculty families program.

Sharon Beier and her colleagues conducted a survey of 294 youth to study the influence of natural mentors in a youth’s likelihood of participating in five high-risk behaviors. They determined that the avoidance of negative habits in mentors was reflected in the lives of their youth. “Smoking, drug use, carrying a weapon and unsafe sex were all affected. Participation in the fifth high-risk factor, alcohol use, was not affected.”¹⁶ According to a Gallup poll published on their website, the percentage of Americans who “have occasion to use alcoholic beverages” has remained between 62% and 66% for the past decade.¹⁷ Since Sharon Beier’s survey was not specific to a group

¹⁴Stoddard, 122.

¹⁵Ibid., 132.

¹⁶Rhodes, 11.

¹⁷Lydia Saad, “Drinking Habits Steady Amid Recession,” June 29, 2009, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/121277/drinking-habits-steady-amid-recession.aspx> (accessed January 27, 2011).

of individuals, it seems reasonable to assume that roughly half of the surveyed youths' natural mentors had 'occasion to use alcoholic beverages.' This all comes back to modeling behavior. The fact that the mentors themselves avoided smoking, drug abuse, carrying of weapons or participation in unsafe sex led the youth to choose those same actions. Yet in the area of alcohol consumption, many mentors chose moderation instead of the abstinence and their mentees witnessed their example. We need to be so very careful concerning our choices and habits, knowing the extent of our behavioral influence in contrast to our verbal influence in the lives and futures of our protégés. "We are, all of us, the sum of our influences."¹⁸

Exodus 18:21-23: Not Going It Alone

One of the dangers of mentoring is the high rate of burn-out. Exodus 18 tells us that even Moses, one of God's most devoted servants, also struggled with burn-out. Verses 21-23 tell us that Moses was becoming exhausted. So many people relied on him every day, bringing before him the major conflicts as well as menial ones. He soon became overwhelmed with the constant work and responsibilities. His father-in-law saw Moses' struggle and offered a moment of mentoring in the form of well-conceived advice. The Bible tells us Jethro's counsel, "Select capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. Have them serve as judges for the people at all times, but have them bring the difficult cases to you; the simple cases they can decide themselves. That will make your load lighter, because they will share it with you. If you

¹⁸Washington, 270.

do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied" (Exod 18:21-23). We cannot succeed in God's work if we attempt to work alone. The elderly are not the church of yesterday, the middle aged are not the church of today, and the youth are not the church of tomorrow. We all are the church of yesterday, today and tomorrow, and we must all work together to effectively reach others for Christ. When the work is not spread out and when we are not mentoring others to come alongside us then the strain will be too much and God's work will suffer.

Concerning the end times the prophet Joel said, "And afterward, I will pour out My Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions" (Joel 2:28). Paul states in 1 Corinthians 14:4 that "one who speaks a word of prophecy strengthens the entire church." Hence we see that Christ desires unity in His church, especially in the end times, and will pour out His Holy Spirit on His people to a special measure not only for their own benefit but for the edification of the church. He will gift members of each generation for the benefit of all, and thus desires for the generations to work together for the advancement of the Gospel message. According to David Stoddard in *The Heart of Mentoring*, "The greatest poverty is the inability to give."¹⁹ This includes our power and position. Unless we are able to share and teach the next generation coming up, then not only will the church die with us but even before that our own faith will become stagnant and die even though we are physically alive. "We should point out that one of the side benefits of mentoring is

¹⁹Stoddard, 34.

that you become more aware of your own progress-or lack of it.”²⁰ When you choose to teach others and invest of yourself by mentoring them, it is then that you realize the areas in which you yourself are in need of growth. When you devote yourself to a mentoring relationship, God honors your devotion and provides your personal growth in order to bless both you and your mentee. According to 1 Cor 4:15, “there aren’t many fathers willing to take the time and effort to help you grow up” (*The Message*). This verse expresses why there is such a need for the mentoring relationship—so that men and women can fill the gaps left by parents not willing or not able to fulfill their parental role adequately. Thus, regardless of the lack in a youth’s family life, he or she is still enabled to grow into man or woman God intended.

Barnabas: Mentors Making Mentors

One of the greatest mentors in the New Testament was Barnabas. Each time the Bible speaks of him, it is in the context of his mentoring a fellow Christian—mainly Paul and later John Mark. “Spiritual companionship is a lifeline for people in youth ministry.”²¹ Barnabas knew the importance of not going it alone. He always had support and companionship which benefitted him, but he also was mentoring them all the time which simultaneously benefitted them. Even when Jesus sent the twelve disciples to preach the good news to the Jews, He sent them out in pairs. This was not necessarily to encourage a mentoring relationship between the two disciples, but to provide the necessary support and companionship they would need while away from their mentor

²⁰Bo Boshers and Judson Poling, *The Be With Factor* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 55.

²¹Patricia Hendricks, *Hungry Souls: Holy Companions* (Harrisburg, New York: Morehouse Publishing, 2006), 97.

Jesus. As Solomon stated in Eccl 4:12: “A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and defend themselves.” During one of Barnabas and Paul’s missionary trips, they took along John Mark who then deserted them and returned home. “A good mentor knows that the investment in a student won’t necessarily pay off in the short term . . . plant a shade tree under which someone else will sit.”²² It is vital to remember that the differences you are making in someone’s life will often not blossom until much later. Superficial changes to a person’s appearance are immediately evident, yet they are short-lived. Truly mentoring a person changes their heart, a process much more involved and hence much slower, yet infinitely more precious. This change may not become evident as quickly, but it also will not fade as quickly. I myself have mentored youth, sometimes for as short a time span as a year and sometimes for many years. I have seen that mentoring, and the genuine care and concern that by nature accompanies that relationship, marks the heart of a young person and joins the two of you with a special bond that remains long after the relationship may fall by the wayside. I have also spoken to other faculty who have experienced the same reward, as years later they receive notes of appreciation for their friendship and love from their former mentees. Mentoring is a gift that truly lasts a lifetime!

In Acts 15:37 Paul relates that later in Barnabas’ life he decided to travel with John Mark once again. Paul, however, absolutely refused in light of their previous experience with John Mark’s desertion. Evidently more underlying issues existed than the Bible records, causing such an unwavering refusal from Paul. This brings to light yet another aspect of mentoring. Not every mentor-protégé match is healthy. Sometimes

²²Boshers and Poling, 24.

people simply do not thrive with others. This does not reflect poorly on the character of either person, but is simply a trait of humankind that not all personalities positively interact. Whether the area of conflict is in ideals, values, moods, quirks or a host of other potential clashes, it is sometimes best simply to terminate the mentoring relationship for the benefit of both parties. This, however, does not indicate that a mentor should give up entirely nor that a protégé is not capable of being mentored. Just as a person is not ideally suited for living in a marriage relationship with everyone they ever dated, so mentors and protégés sometimes must look for another person for whom they are a better match. Sometimes you must delve into a few mentoring relationships before you find a suitable match that benefits both parties.

Acts tells us that the disagreement concerning John Mark's readmission to the missionary team caused Barnabas to split with Paul and accept John Mark as a partner in his missionary work. This work found great success and many souls were added to the Kingdom (see Acts 15:36-41). Hence, it is very important to find the right fit in a mentoring relationship. This does not, however, mean that a person should be quick to sever a mentoring relationship when any conflict arises. Just as a marriage requires compromise and patience, so a mentoring relationship requires dedication and forgiveness. Yet there are times when it is not beneficial to continue in the relationship, and the decision must be made to sever ties and build other relationships that can more effectively benefit the work of God. Mentoring should be mutually beneficial. It should feed the soul, not drain the energies. It should, at times, even be fun. The mentoring relationship should be one that is enjoyed, protected, and nourished. When it becomes a hardship, a drain to the energies, or only one more responsibility, then it is time to re-

evaluate the benefits and liabilities, and perhaps time to cut ties. This will allow new healthier relationships to build, which will further ministry.

Another aspect worthy of note in the story of Barnabas and Paul can be found in the verses following the division between the disciples. When one is mentored, he or she can grow to become a mentor themselves. Barnabas mentored Paul for many years, beginning in Acts 13 when he stood before the Jews in defense of Paul shortly after Paul's conversion. When Barnabas and Paul later decided to go separate ways, Paul did not simply continue his ministry alone. The Bible tells us that while Barnabas then mentored John Mark, Paul chose to mentor Silas. True mentors teach their protégés to mentor. "Humans tend to emulate the behavior they see in others, especially when that behavior is rewarded."²³ Thus, it keeps the cycle going and can affect many others. The Bible has no record, but it is quite possible and perhaps even probable that Barnabas mentored many Christians before choosing Paul. It is likely that Paul also mentored others, as well as John Mark, Silas and Onesimus. The relationships that are built cause effective changes not only in your protégé, but for many generations that follow. Many times people choose to mentor simply because someone in their lives took the time to mentor them. "There is no magic formula for mentoring, no timing will ever be perfect, and no matter how uncomfortable you feel about getting started, it will never feel right until you go for it."²⁴

²³Margo Murray, *Beyond the Myths and Magic of Mentoring* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1991), 7.

²⁴Stoddard, 196.

Ephesians 4:11-13: Differing Gifts

“It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Eph 4:11-13). According to this passage, every one that belongs to God has been given a spiritual gift. Let no one say that they have not talents or skills. If you are in Christ, then you are gifted to the nourishment of His church in some way. “Work is an integral part of our spiritual lives.”²⁵ God knows that to build unity we must all work together and feel we benefit His cause. Unity cannot be built with just part of the whole. If something is to be unified then all parts must be present and must be working together in harmony and contentment.

Yet often God’s people are satisfied to simply sit in the pews each week and take in the pastor’s message, leaving the work to other Christians whom they consider to be better suited to the tasks. This may not even be a form of laziness. Perhaps it is from a lack of self-confidence, an ignorance of one’s spiritual gifts, or a lack of direction. Perhaps it is because the individual has never asked God to lead him or her along a path which leads to active involvement and hence church growth. Actor Denzel Washington addresses this issue in his book *A Hand to Guide Me*, “I also believe we miss our marks from time to time, and without a certain push in the right direction we might never find the path we were meant to follow.”²⁶ We need people to give us that extra push

²⁵Conley, 42.

²⁶Washington, 9.

sometimes. It often takes someone looking in from the outside to get a truer perspective of our present condition and the direction which we need pursue in order to grow more fully in Christ and to benefit our church family by filling in the gaps created by God specifically for the gifts He bestowed upon us. God creates the needs to fit the gifts, and grants the gifts to His children to fit His needs. When one child neglects his duty, church unity suffers.

This passage in Ephesians does not provide an exhaustive list of spiritual gifts, despite the fact that many are mentioned. God's work is great, and therefore the needs are great and require a variety of gifts and passions. In light of this fact, it must be concluded that not everyone was given the gift of mentoring. "A need does not constitute a call."²⁷ The church may have a great need for mentors, and an impassioned speaker may present compelling arguments that cause your conscience to propel you toward volunteering. Yet you should be very cautious about following your heart if your head says otherwise. The worst result of your not volunteering is that another individual may not experience the mentoring relationship. Yet this is less damaging than a mentoring relationship that should never have existed. An unhealthy mentoring relationship hurts God's cause in two ways. First of all, the protégé you mentor could potentially be missing a healthier mentoring relationship. Second, by choosing to devote your energies to the mentoring relationship when God has called you to fill a different need means that you are not utilizing the gift God has given you, nor fulfilling the need that this gift compliments. When deciding to become a youth mentor, it is vital that you struggle with God to be confident He is calling you to this ministry. If He is not calling you, you will

²⁷Stoddard, 131.

never find success in this area and your faith could suffer as your frustration levels rise.

“Just as not all adults are suited for mentoring, not all youth are suited for being mentored.”²⁸ Some youth are not at that point in life that allows them to accept the mentoring relationship. In this case it is more effective to simply offer friendship with the knowledge that when they are ready, a mentoring relationship is available. However, if a youth is not ready for that level of intimacy, great damage can be inflicted by forcing the relationship. This will also preclude any acceptance of that type of relationship in later years when the youth would otherwise have been receptive. Hence a potentially rewarding experience becomes traumatic, and all positive potential is lost to resentment and mistrust.

Another aspect to consider from this passage is that no individual has been given every gift. “Be careful about trying to become more than you can be as a mentor.”²⁹ No mentor, regardless of their gifts, their passion or their devotion, will be able to guide a protégé in every situation life presents. Some situations can only be left in the hands of God, with prayer and patience being the only source of aid you can offer. Other situations will require the help of those more familiar with the intricacies of the trials, and you can only direct them to those individuals. Remember that God gave varying gifts to varying individuals with the express purpose of unifying His church. No one is gifted in every area, and everyone is not called to fulfill the same needs of the church. He desires that we will learn to rely on each other, to give of ourselves altruistically, to support others as they utilize God’s gifts and to allow others to forego service in areas to which

²⁸Rhodes, 84.

²⁹Fry, 105.

they are not called. We become stronger when we are willing to sacrifice for the benefit of others. When the people of God pool their gifts, their resources and their passions, everyone profits. As David Stoddard says, “If you have a passion for something, you will make time for it.”³⁰ If mentoring is your gift, you will also have a passion for it. You will want to spend time doing it and it will energize you. If you are dreading the time you spend with your protégé or find the task draining, then you must consider that mentoring simply may not be God’s calling for you. God gives us our passions as well as our gifts. God says in Psalms 37:4, “Delight thyself also in the Lord: and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart.” God gives us our passion. Thus, we should find that our gifts and our passions complement each other, and we should find excitement and fulfillment in our calling. This presents a positive image for those outside of the church, and they will long to find the joy only to be found in the family of God.

Matthew 28:20: Teach Others

The greatest example that any mentor can emulate is that of Jesus Christ. Jesus called twelve men from various walks of life and, with the exception of one, melded them into a unified body of evangelists that shook the world. He only had three and a half years to teach them new truths, to transform their thinking to mirror His own, and to instill in them a devotion to their heavenly Father that would remain firm even in the face of cruel deaths. This timeframe of three and a half years is incredibly about the same time frame as an academy experience. This provides evidence that a rather short time period can make an incredible difference in people’s lives. It is, therefore, necessary to

³⁰Stoddard, 55.

study the life of Christ so that we can mentor youth as effectively as Christ mentored His disciples, knowing that the youth are called to the same purpose as the disciples. They are to spread the Good News to the world, living in accordance with the Word and presenting a relationship with Christ as not only beneficial but vital. Jesus Himself commended to us the responsibility of mentoring in His final directions given to the disciples before His ascension. In what is often called The Great Commission Jesus states, "Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." We often view this mandate as a decree that we should go to the world, present evangelistic campaigns, baptize the people, and then move to the next destination. This is not the heart of Jesus' message. While it is true that we, as Christ's disciples, are to disciple the whole world, we must consider that this command encompasses more than dynamic preaching and massive baptismal celebrations.

'Making disciples' does not only mean persuading others to accept Christ as their Savior and following that persuasion with the rite of baptism. Truly 'making a disciple' is time-consuming. It involves teaching truths in steps as the convert is able to integrate them into his or her life. It involves encouraging new converts as they learn to rely wholly on God for their salvation and their material needs. It involves investing ourselves in them, and teaching them that God loves them and passionately desires to invest Himself in them. It takes devotion. "Take what you know and what you love and pass it on; keep it going."³¹ Jesus does not ask you to teach what you do not know, nor to share a faith you have not experienced. Share what you know, what you have

³¹Washington, 225.

experienced, and what you have learned. This is the core of the mentoring relationship.

To train a disciple, a mentor must lead by example. This is not something that can happen in a four week seminar. A disciple is trained through spending time individually with them, watching them grow and change into a mature Christian, and encouraging them during times of trial. Just as a child is not born as an adult but must grow and mature in understanding, so a new Christian must also grow in maturity and understanding. This process requires adequate time and nurturing. Unfortunately, in our culture we are not willing to invest much time. We desire to see change quickly, to witness instant conversion and unfettered spiritual success. It is necessary that we consider our own journey with the Lord that we remember our beginnings and the struggles and mistakes we have experienced. Yet we persevered in the Lord, and we must be willing to do as much for those we would lead to Christ. “Even as Paul modeled responsibility and diligent work habits for those he brought to the Lord, so should we.”³²

When we consider mentoring as strictly a responsibility, one which we dread and drudgingly fulfill, our protégés quickly lose heart and relinquish the relationship. We will become a liability to God instead of an asset to His will. Only if we truly desire to positively alter another’s life and bring them into a saving relationship with the Lord will our efforts be successful both for ourselves and for our protégés. This passion for their success both in this world and for eternity will instill in us the dedication to invest our most precious commodity—our time. This does not mean casual conversations once a month, or the occasional greeting card wishing them a good day. True mentoring

³²Conley, 47.

requires the conscientious devotion of regularly scheduled quality interaction when your protégé is the only one with claims to your attention.

Conclusion

When you have trained a disciple or have mentored a youth, they will most likely in turn mentor someone else. “The ultimate goal of mentoring is reproduction: seeing the people we mentor begin to reproduce themselves by mentoring others.”³³ This ‘reproduction’ refers to our training others to mirror our strengths and skills, which brings a greater reward when we see our investment in turn invested in others. When this natural progression occurs, then the “workforce” of mentors grows tremendously. God needs more mentors. The most effective way to grow our mentoring pool is to mentor and train protégés now, teaching them to do the same for others. Consider this word of caution, however. “Keep in mind that there are no guarantees someone you have mentored will mentor someone else.”³⁴ Also consider our earlier topic, that not everyone has the gift to be a youth mentor. We mentor youth as a gift and this gift should come with no prerequisite that the youth will mentor in return. In the same vein, youth who have been mentored should not mentor only to repay a debt to society despite their lack of desire or ability. Mentoring is only effective and therefore beneficial if God designs the relationship. God is to choose an individual’s role. Our role is to help equip them for the task God has chosen for them. We must also realize that God chooses whom we mentor, and whether or not we are called to mentor. It is vital that we stay within the will

³³Stoddard, 182.

³⁴Ibid., 189.

of God as we seek to further His Kingdom. God will never bless something that He has not ordained in the first place! As you begin your journey in mentoring, spend time seeking God's will. Pray for yourself as a mentor. Pray for your protégé. Pray for your fellow church members who will also foster your protégé's growth. Be sincere, devoted, passionate, and above all else, willing to follow God's leading despite your own plans or desires. God has a specific ministry in the church for you, which may or may not include mentoring, and we are to fill the role He has tailored for our gifts. God alone can successfully build the mentoring relationship, utilizing the gift to nurture His children and unify His church in preparation for eternity.

CHAPTER 3

GENERATIONAL CONFLICTS AND COMMONALITIES

How Generations Are Shaped

For the purpose of this paper, we will address how generations have been shaped only in the American culture and thus discuss only the attributes of Americans and their generational characteristics. “Adolescence begins in biology and ends in culture.”¹ Adolescence is a time in everyone’s life defined by a searching for individuality that often conflicts with a desire to remain mainstream. Generally speaking, youth have spent their lives immersed in a certain type of family life. At this point in their lives, they begin to discover that this lifestyle may differ from the ways of society and they must adjust accordingly. Yet they still must remain in the home, and hence lead, to some extent, a life of double standards. They have been taught a value system by their parents, regardless of the level of morality of that value system, and now they must test those values and decide whether or not to incorporate them into their own characters.

Before the dawn of high school, which developed in America around the 1920s, the period of adjustment known as adolescence did not exist. As children neared the teenage years, they took their place on the family farm or made arrangements for farmland of their own. They chose spouses and planned their own families, settling in for

¹Chap Clark, *Hurt* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 28.

the long term. Very little time was spent in preparing to depart, as the next stage of life greatly paralleled earlier life. Hence, when the time came, youth simply departed from home. In fact, it was not unusual for youth to live near their parents or other family members for the duration of their lives.

Many aspects of life have changed since the 1920s, including the development of high school education and the accompanying longer period of time that youth must then reside with their parents. Hence the teenage years, instead of ushering in adulthood, have become a time for evolving values and determining one's character. "Most people see those in this general age range as being sort of adults and sort of kids."² Adolescents still have the tendencies of children and lack the understanding of adults, yet they experiment with adult decisions and responsibilities as they discover their strengths and weaknesses. While they often claim they desire to be treated as adults, they quickly revert to hiding behind their age when making mistakes. This period of fluctuation between childhood and adulthood forms a generation by the commonalities that teenagers have with those living at the same time as you are.

"Because each decade is unique, those who grow up in a particular decade develop values that are different from those who grow up during other decades."³ During this adolescent period while teenagers are developing their value system, major world events occur and shape the generation. Some examples of this phenomenon include the Great Depression, the war in Vietnam, the Kennedy Assassination, Nixon resignation, the

²Clark, 27.

³Rick Hicks and Kathy Hicks, *Boomers, Xers, and Other Strangers* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1999), 42.

ending of the Cold War, the explosion of the spaceship Challenger, and the explosion of the internet. Each of these and many more events impacted the adolescents that were forming their value system during that time. Thus, when a group of people experience the same events that are integrated into their value systems, their value systems and life outlook tend to bend the same direction. "What we value is what we feel is worth fighting for and standing up for."⁴ If, for example, youth learn the value of peace from an event such as the tearing down of the Berlin wall, then they will fight for peace during subsequent opportunities. These actions will further cement their value of peace, which leads to further actions promoting peace, and the cycle continues throughout life.

Although human values remain fairly consistent after adolescence, major events can still cause a re-evaluation and perhaps reformation of values and character. A modern example would be the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. Many post-adolescents, seemingly regardless of age or generation, re-evaluated the demands on their time. Family values took center stage as the importance of devotion to work suddenly faded. "A significant emotional event so deeply affects us that it causes us to reevaluate our basic values and makes us exchange one value for another."⁵ However, there are many other factors than just news items that help to make up a generation.

"In addition to the coincidence of birth, a generation is also defined by common tastes, attitudes, and experiences; a generation cohort is a product of its times and tastes."⁶ Thus in one aspect, a generation is formed not only by dramatic events but also

⁴Hicks and Hicks, 12.

⁵Ibid., 19.

⁶Bob Filipczak, Claire Raines, and Ron Zemke, *Generations at Work* (New York: American Management Association, 2000), 16.

by the actions, tastes, and values of the previous generation. For example, the Boomer generation considered the inequality of women to be a major societal injustice and devoted time, expense and emotional energy to achieving equality in the workplace as well as in the political realm. This struggle allowed for the vast majority of women to enter the workforce which in turn meant that many did not remain at home with their children—hence developed the latch-key syndrome that so dramatically influenced the following generation, known as Generation X. In fact, this latch-key syndrome is one of the defining characteristics of that generation. However, there are many other factors besides the actions of previous generations that mold the development of the newer generations.

One major developmental factor in a generation is the economy. “Our family’s income can have a significant impact on our value development as we are growing up. There is a truism that says, ‘What you grew up without, you will strive for, and what you grew up with, you will take for granted.’”⁷ This example is very clear in the generation that lived through the Great Depression. They value material possessions and tend to hold on to items other generations would quickly discard in response to their lack earlier in life. Even though they no longer live under the duress of the Depression, they subconsciously fear a return to want and hence guard against this perceived imminent lack by what engaging in what other generations define as hoarding.

Another major developmental factor in a generation is family dynamics, which dramatically affect the way individuals think and act. “Family is a key factor in value

⁷Hicks and Hicks, 35.

development. In fact, it's the primary source for the values we choose."⁸ A rapid reflection on family dynamics over the course of the past few decades demonstrates a drastic change in the family system. For example, statistically speaking a large number of today's Millennial generation are growing up in single parent households, being shuffled from one parent's custody to the other. The Builder generation, however, grew up not only with a mother and a father in the same household, but often with a grandfather and grandmother either living with them or even just next door. Hence the Builder generation grew up with the consistency of a single household and the security of many adults contributing to the upbringing, supporting and development of the children. That generation knew the values of their family, the expectations placed upon them, and the knowledge that they had a stable foundation on which to rely.

The Millennial generation, in contrast, has had to cope with the expectations and values of two separate households, often with the added tension exhibited between their mother and father resulting from broken marriage vows. Their parents often vie for their allegiance, creating instability and confusion. Expectations are not always clear or consistent, as being well-liked becomes more important to the parent than the vital job of true parenting. The teenager is left with unclear boundaries, inconsistent values and a shaky foundation at best. This causes a delay in the teenager's development of their own values and belief system, and sometimes even their sense of identity, as they are not provided with the same starting point as those in generations that preceded them. In my belief, these factors have caused an even further lengthening of the adolescent period as teenagers look outside of their family unit in search of consistency, acceptance, and

⁸Hicks and Hicks, 25.

guidance. This also exemplifies the present need for mentors to intercede where the family unit lacks, providing the needs once satisfied within the bounds of relations. Mentors must be willing to invest time, effort, emotions, prayer, and genuine concern for the sake of the upcoming generation in order to lead them, not only into the healthy habits of the present life, but also into the values of the Christian faith.

The last major factor that needs to be addressed in the development of a generation is the factor of friendship. "The influence of friends on our value development is most intense during the socialization stage."⁹ Our friends' values often transfer to our own values, especially in situations where a solid value system has not already been instilled. Such teenagers will look to their friends for guidance in developing their weak value system, realizing their lack and searching to fill that need. Yet even those with a strong foundation are swayed by the influence of those whose acceptance is paramount. Thus, it is crucial that when a child is young they are taught to choose their friends wisely. During this period of adolescence, if they do not have safe friendships then their value systems may be greatly altered. To an adolescent, friends and relationships are of more importance than nearly any other aspect of their lives, including grades, home life, future success, or even personal safety. They must be taught that friendships are to be a realm of safe acceptance and mutual respect, or they must be sacrificed to allow for healthier relationships with truer friends to be forged.

As this chapter has shown so far, a generation is formed by a number of factors occurring during that critical period of life called adolescence. Current events, the values and decisions of previous generations, the economy, the variations of family life, and

⁹Hicks and Hicks, 33.

even the ideas of fellow adolescents all merge to create the unique mixture of characteristics that eventually identify and define a generation. In order to properly address the issues that arise between generations, it is necessary to first study the various generations alive today. It is important to not only be aware of the values and traits of a generation in order to promote harmony between generations, but also to understand the reasoning behind these values and traits to foster understanding, compassion and patience.

The Builders generation is comprised by the oldest population, and will be addressed first. The Boomers follow chronologically and hence in the discussion, followed next by the Xers, and finally the Millennials. Once each generation has been characterized with its interests, faults and strengths, the generations will then be discussed in terms of their struggle to harmoniously interact and ways by which the generations can strive to reach true interdependence and unity as exhorted in scriptures by Jesus Himself in John 17:21, "My prayer for all of them is that they will be one, just as You and I are one, Father," and again by the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 12:27, "Now all of you together are Christ's body, and each one of you is a separate and necessary part of it." The generations must strive to understand each other, to respect each other as fellow servants of Christ, and to work diligently to avoid misunderstandings and unnecessary strife. These efforts cannot succeed without first receiving knowledge of the influences that formed the generations, granting compassion and sympathy for the resulting traits and a desire to build on those traits in furthering the work of the kingdom of God.

Exposing the Builder Generation

The Builder generation (also known as Silents¹⁰) is comprised of those who were born from 1901 to 1945. They grew up during the Great Depression and World War II. They spent a great deal of their time listening to the “golden Age of Radio” as televisions were not yet common in American households. Motion pictures were just beginning their reign on the “silver screen” and women suffragettes were boisterously fighting for the vote. These are only a few of the factors that influenced the development of this resilient generation.

“The Great Depression of the 1930s was probably the most significant value-influencing factor in American history. Those who lived through it still talk about it, while those who didn’t experience it will never quite understand it.”¹¹ Growing up with nothing, not even the basic necessities of life at times, made members of this generation value the potential in all material possessions. The lack of adequate funds required children to use creative measures with available supplies in order to accomplish the necessary tasks. This colored their view of the value of money and the potential value in anything—a view which has not altered regardless of the financial prosperity the generation has since enjoyed. “Waste not, want not was more than a slogan, it was a commandment.”¹² This generation always finished everything that was on their plate, remembering a time when the next full plate may have been days or even weeks away. In

¹⁰Not all authors agree to the terms for the different generations. George Barna in *Baby Busters: The disillusioned Generation* calls them builders. Gary Zusiak in *The Next Generation* calls them the Silent Generation.

¹¹Hicks and Hicks, 68.

¹²Lynne C. Lancaster and David Stillman, *When Generations Collide” Who They Are; Why They Clash; How to Solve the Generational Puzzle at Work* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2002), 19.

addition this generation never discarded anything, knowing that it could be used later for something else if the need arose.

I experienced the truth in this trait personally a few years ago as I was visiting a church for Sabbath worship. The monthly fellowship meal followed the service, and I was invited to join them. After eating I began clearing the tables by collecting the paper plates and plastic silverware, throwing them in the garbage can nearby. I heard a voice reprimanding me, explaining that this church chose instead to wash and reuse their plates and utensils. I looked at the source of this information and discovered it to be an elderly gentleman from the Builder generation. Upon a quick scanning of the dining room, I discovered a great number from the Builder generation and quickly understood my folly. To this generation even something that is understood by society at large to be manufactured for the sole purpose of single use and then discarded is instead considered a sacrilege and a flagrant disregard for the value of money. Although this attitude often leads to storage dilemmas, the advantage for this generation is that a lack in supplies can often be remedied by a thorough search through the items kept on hand.

The Great Depression affected this generation in a multitude of ways, even beyond the scarcity of food and material supplies. "What they were most deprived of was security: financial security, the security of family relationships, the security of property ownership, and job security. Because of this, they are highly motivated to act in ways that they believe will provide security for themselves and those they love."¹³ This trait also translates into the sacred celebration of traditions. Traditions foster a sense of security, knowing that certain aspects of life will always remain the same regardless of

¹³Hicks and Hicks, 81.

the passage of time. Not only does this strengthen the spirit of the generation and lends to the feelings of security in the generations that follow, but it also develops a tender heart toward others as the Builder generation looks to built security for those around them. This provides an extended measure of security for themselves, developing a buffer zone as it were between themselves and the uncertainty of life.

Another factor that affected this Builder generation was family life. "During the 20's, the rural population decreased as the urban population increased, largely due to the financial difficulties of farmers. In 1920, for the first time, the census found the rural population to be smaller than the urban population."¹⁴ People found themselves forced to live in closer proximity to each other as resources became more limited. This affected many aspects of the life of an adolescent. One dramatic effect concerned teenagers living in closer proximity to each other, allowing for greater opportunity for mischief. This can be illustrated by my own experience with my best friend, who lived five miles away from me during childhood. Rarely did we spend much time together, although on occasion we would ride our bikes to each other's homes. Suddenly we began academy life and experienced the strange realm of dorm accommodations. Suddenly we lived only five feet from each other, which allowed for a more intimate relationship and hence a greater ease with each other. Secrets were shared, adventures were planned, and experiences were developed in a way not possible just a few short months previous. This same change in living conditions invoked equally big changes in both behavior and relationships among the generations' youth.

¹⁴Hicks and Hicks, 59.

Another factor of family life that influenced the Builder generation was the unwavering conviction that the mother's sole responsibility was the proper functioning of the home and the family (see appendix 1). When an adolescent of that generation returned home from school, work, or simply an afternoon of play, the mother was always available for support, direction, and discipline. There was always an adult at home making sure homework was understood, chores were completed, and attitudes were acceptable. This fostered an understanding that families could be relied upon, further ingrained by the rarity of divorce in that era. This aided in tremendous stability when the rest of the world was going through the upheaval of the Great Depression.

Growing up in World War II, the Builder generation understood the need for order. "When the rubber hits the road, Traditionalists [the Builder generation] understand that leaders need to lead and troops need to follow."¹⁵ This aptly describes their view of leadership. Leadership is not to be questioned, merely followed. It is not required, nor even requested, that followers agree with or understand the orders, but only that the orders are obeyed. Obviously this trait can be considered a strength or a liability depending upon the situation and the other generations involved, but it is likely that once a member of this generation declares loyalty to an individual, that loyalty is ascribed for life. "The generational personality of the Traditionalists who lived through these events and conditions could be best described by a single word: Loyal."¹⁶ "They are also an irreplaceable repository of love and wisdom, practical wiliness, and more than a few

¹⁵Lancaster and Stillman, 20.

¹⁶Ibid., 19.

critical organizational contacts.”¹⁷ If it is imperative that a certain task be accomplished, it is helpful to include a few members of the Builder generation in the execution of that task. Their wisdom and loyalty can prove truly invaluable!

Exposing the Baby Boomer Generation

The Baby Boomer generation consists of those born between the years of 1946 and 1964. Their most distinguishing characteristic is referenced by their title, as so many babies were born within that time frame. This incredible increase in births surpassed anything seen in previous generations, and has not been equaled since. Thus the sheer number of this generation alone has made an indelible mark on society.

Some of the influences in society that defined this generation included prosperity, children in the spotlight, television, the Vietnam War, the Civil Rights Movement, the Cold War, women’s liberation, and the space race. These events molded this generation and defined their values and expectations, but television seemed to be the most influential. “The single most important arrival during the birth years of the Boom was television.”¹⁸ Families no longer gathered around the radio after dinner for their favorite programs such as Little Orphan Annie or Roy Rogers. Instead families gathered around the television set, ruled by the programming schedule of the networks since video cassette recorders were not yet available. This new electronic age also ushered in the phenomenon of watching television during supper, replacing the time which was once reserved for family conversation and reconnection.

¹⁷Filipczak, Raines, and Zemke, 19.

¹⁸Lancaster and Stillman, 21.

One factor which may be valuable in analyzing a generation is their own view of themselves. “They [Baby Boomers] define the generational world as ‘pre-us’, ‘us’, and ‘post-us’ when they look to make sense of it.”¹⁹ Individuals of this generation migrated toward an inward conception of reality, defining the outside world in accordance with the manner in which they were affected. This in part was due to their growing up as the center of their family’s attention. Also, it came somewhat simply by being members of the largest population. Those with the most votes win, and this generation had the sheer numbers to win in most arenas. “This was a decade of unprecedented population and economic growth.”²⁰ Vastly separated from the previous generation that experienced the Great Depression, this generation had great opportunities in the world of finance. The country had grown economically by leaps and bounds, and often the children were provided for materialistically beyond their needs simply because the parents had lacked during their own childhoods and vicariously filled their needs through the lives of their children.

The home life for this generation also differed greatly from the previous generation. Families began to disperse, making it much less likely that grandparents would live even next door, let alone in the same household. Often, in fact, grandparents or extended family members did not even reside in the same state (see appendix 1). The family unit shrank tremendously, limiting the foundation on which children could build their identities and family loyalty. In previous generations, extended family members would grow up together with cousins often being as close as siblings. This generation,

¹⁹Filipczak, Raines, and Zemke, 20.

²⁰Hicks and Hicks, 112.

however, witnessed the first family reunions, and therefore knew relatives only by the occasional visit instead of an intimate relationship. However, family still held strong ties and loyalty among relatives was still passionately preserved, providing this generation with a deeper sense of belonging and therefore bolstering them with self-confidence to keep them strong as they found their niche in society.

Another important factor to consider in the characters of the Baby Boomers is their competitive nature. "This generation loves to be challenged."²¹ Elsewhere in their book, *When Generations Collide*, Lancaster and Stillman state, "Another trait that marks the Baby Boomers is competitiveness."²² This can be attributed to their sheer numbers, as they found it necessary to find individuality in the workforce in order to compete and succeed. This necessity caused the development of workaholic syndromes found so rampant in their generation. They will continue working until the job is complete, even at great personal sacrifice. As Lynne Lancaster observed, "Boomers have always wanted to excel in their careers, and many are reaching a critical life stage in which the ticking of the biological clock is being replaced by the ticking of the career clock."²³ This devotion greatly affected their home life, and the development of the next generation as will be addressed in a later section. This competitive nature also spread to other areas of life, including religion. "One [area of sacrifice for the sake of success] was the spiritual health of the contemporary American church. Some young leaders strongly believed the [Baby] Boomer pastors of America's leading mega-churches had given up Biblically

²¹Lancaster and Stillman, 57.

²²Ibid., 22.

²³Ibid., 57.

based ecclesiology for a culturally determined, marketing-oriented model, sacrificing spiritual depth for numerical growth.”²⁴ “Success” is measured by Boomers in terms of size even if it means sacrificing loyalty to one’s denomination. The Baby Boomer generation believed that only the best was worth achieving, and would struggle to reach their goals at great cost, not only personally, but also corporately and even spiritually. Completing a task to the absolute best of one’s ability became paramount, and very little could sway them from reaching that level of perfection.

The final character trait that distinguishes the Baby Boomer generation is their unrelenting optimism in every aspect of their lives. They truly believe they can achieve greatness and success, and hence are motivated to strive toward those goals. “We said, the key word to remember about Traditionalists [the Builder generation] is loyal; the key word for [Baby] Boomers is optimistic.”²⁵ When presented with a problem, the Baby Boomers do not consider themselves defeated. Instead they consider the obstacles that bar their journey and plot a new course to either overcome those obstacles or avoid them entirely while still reaching their original goal. They meet impending conflicts directly and work diligently to address the issues. They see a myriad of potential solutions to every problem and consider the only true dilemma is to choose the best option.

Exposing Generation X

Generation X consists of those born between 1965 and 1976. The defining events during their value setting time include the Watergate scandal, the development of the

²⁴Steve Rabey, *In Search of Authentic Faith* (Colorado Springs, CO: Waterbrook Press, 2001), 163.

²⁵Lancaster and Stillman, 21.

latchkey kid, stagflation, the fall of Berlin Wall, the Wall Street Frenzy, the Persian Gulf War, the emergence of MTV, the explosion of the AIDS virus, the introduction of computers, the Challenger space shuttle disaster, and Glasnost Perestroika. Reviewing this list even with a quick glance can cause a sense of defeat and melancholy, illustrating the desperation with which this generation searched for the foundational security that other generations took for granted. Being of this generation, I myself recall these events and can attest to my location and emotions at the time the events unfolded. Institutions that previous generations considered indestructible fell apart, even the American government to an extent with the Watergate scandal and the resulting resignation of President Richard Nixon. The financial market held no stability as it fell apart and boomed during this time, leaving the public to wonder at its dependability even while its success tempted them into its realm. World predictability gave way with the ending of the Cold War, leaving Americans unsure of their relationship with Russia, the other World Super Power. Breakthroughs in medicine which allowed for the eradication of many childhood scourges and increased both the lifespan and life quality of the population were countered by the emergence of the AIDS virus and the increased varieties and occurrences of cancers. The one constant in the adolescence of this generation was that of change.

“The Xers are a deeply segmented, fragmented cohort.”²⁶ The individuals that comprise this generation differ so widely from each other that they were ultimately labeled as Generation X due to a lack of generic qualities by which to define them. When allowed to define themselves, the generation chooses labels such as boarders, skinheads

²⁶Filipczak, Raines, and Zemke, 21.

and preppies, yet they claim a deep aversion to being labeled by others. "One of the most significant characteristics that describes or identifies the Gen-Xers is their commitment to diversity."²⁷ They like to view events or situations from various perspectives, considering all of the aspects before choosing a reality. This can cause frustration as others attempt to work with them, since their perspectives may change from day to day. "No matter what I plan for the future,' one Xer told Time, 'when I finally get there, it's always something different."²⁸

The family life of this generation differed greatly from the experiences of the two previous generations. Family, while incredibly stable and broad for the Builder generation and relatively stable yet moderately segmented for Baby Boomers, became significantly unstable and detrimentally fragmented for Generation X. This was the first generation to experience single parent families, and they pioneered the lifestyle known as the latchkey kid (see appendix 1). A latchkey kid can be defined as an adolescent who is left alone in the home after the school hours until either one or both parents return from the workplace. They possess their own house key and are responsible for their own welfare for many hours a day once the school day has ended, and often all day when school is not in session. "And they do get into trouble—a large percentage of teenage pregnancies occur between 3 and 5 p.m., as do a large percentage of teenage crimes."²⁹ For the first time a generation of adolescents were completely left to their own devices for at least a two hour period of time every afternoon of every day.

²⁷Hicks and Hicks, 262.

²⁸Rabey, 23.

²⁹Jean M. Twenge, *Generation Me* (New York: Free Press, 2006), 234.

Adding to the destructive opportunities afforded by the latchkey lifestyle was the generational habits of the Baby Boomer parents. As previously mentioned, Baby Boomers are highly motivated to succeed in their careers. Accordingly, they would often invest long hours at the office to move up the corporate ladder, leaving little time to invest in the home or the family, or even the children. This hugely impacted the work ethic of Generation X, as they witnessed the sacrifices of their parents for the sake of the workplace and determined that the price was far too high. They experienced the loss of family and relationships at the expense of careers and threw themselves passionately into the other extreme. They devote themselves to living outside of work, and work only as it enables a greater enjoyment in life beyond work. "Xers are very clear about the meaning of the word balance in their lives: Work is work. And they work to live, not live to work."³⁰ This explains Lynne Lancaster and David Stillman's insight that Gen X is "possibly the most misunderstood generation in the workforce today."³¹ This generation will sometimes put in the long hours of previous generations, but only if it does not affect their relationships with family and friends which they value far above their careers. In light of these priorities, their commitment to the workplace may seem to change from day to day depending on the events in the lives of their friends and family and their respective obligations in those lives.

Further complicating the lives of Generation X was the unprecedented change that occurred during their adolescence. This change taught them that nothing could be counted on, that everything was disposable, and that, as discussed in the previous

³⁰Filipczak, Raines, and Zemke, 21.

³¹Lancaster and Stillman, 24.

paragraphs, they were alone in the face of these changes. “In addition, any generation raised with the knowledge that computers become obsolete in a matter of months can’t help but feel that way about their own shelf life at work.”³² This generation witnessed the outdating of 8 tracks by cassette tapes which were in turn outdated by compact discs. They learned the DOS system of computers only to have it outdated by Windows software and then expanded upon by the internet. They adjusted the rabbit ears of their parents television sets only to later enjoy the benefits of cable and eventually web streaming. These changes were rapid, as I myself can testify. My parents won a computer when I was ten years old, making us the first in the neighborhood to own one. Everyone made excuses to visit, studying this new technology with awe and a sense of reverence. By the time I entered high school, all of my classmates owned laptops and the internet was well on its way to global domination. For Generation X, simply enjoying the status quo was never an option. “Their greatest fear is that they might become stagnant.”³³

In light of the influences that shaped Generation X, it is undoubtedly not surprising that their view of previous generations held much pessimism. “With the explosion of twenty-four-hour media and tabloid journalism, Xers saw almost every role model of their time indicted or exposed as someone far too human to be a hero.”³⁴ This has led the generation to be very skeptical, not just about people but about institutions as well. This generation learned all too well that they could depend on nothing and no one,

³²Lancaster and Stillman, 59.

³³Ibid., 58.

³⁴Ibid., 24.

as everything changed and everyone eventually faltered. “While Traditionalists [the Builder generation] were characterized as being extremely loyal and [Baby] Boomers optimistic, [Generation] Xers have been marked by skepticism.”³⁵

Exposing the Millennial Generation

The Millennials were born between the years of 1977 and 1997. The environment during which this generation matured is astounding to previous generations, and explains many of their values and viewpoints. Millennials have no concept of the Cold War and many do not even know to what that term refers. They would not recognize the record player, rotary telephones, typewriters or television antennas. They never knew life before VCR's, the internet, cellular telephones, and MP3 players. They experienced the boom in technology, the Oklahoma City bombing, the Columbine shootings, the McGwire and Sosa scandals, the emergence of soccer moms and the September 11 attacks. Yet perhaps the most identifying mark of this generation is found in their reliance on the cellular telephone industry. Talking has been replaced by texting, and even email which replaced 'snail mail' has itself been replaced by instant messaging. Facebook and Twitter telephone applications lead the market in downloads, and ring tone options struggle to remain relevant. “Technology moved even closer to people; in fact, it moved right into their pockets.”³⁶ Touch and verbal communication is at an all time low. While Millennials can lounge behind a computer screen and build relationships across time zones with virtual strangers thus allowing them to broaden their friendship base, they are

³⁵Lancaster and Stillman, 25.

³⁶Ibid., 28.

just as likely to furiously text messages to people in the same immediate vicinity in lieu of engaging in an interactive verbal conversation. They have developed new methods of communication and in turn have not fully developed their ability to communicate in person with body language and voice inflections, making relations with previous generations who are not so savvy with modern technology yet very adept with the intimacies of direct communication quite difficult.

It may be surprising in light of the tragedies enveloping this generation's adolescence that Millennials are very optimistic. They witnessed the Oklahoma City bombings, were the first generation to experience major school violence and watched the nation reel in shock at the devastation of the September 11 attacks. Yet as Ron Zemke writes, "They're an optimistic bunch, and what their parents think is important to them."³⁷ Indeed, this generation places a great value on their parents' approval, despite the prevalence of divorce which forced many of them to shuffle between the separate households. They have become adept at adjusting, not only to the various demands of family life, but also to the changing demands of society, technology and the economy. This generation was reared by Generation X who suffered greatly in their own estimation by the latchkey kid syndrome. Hence Generation X strived to ensure their children were not neglected in the name of career advancement, to the drastic lengths of perhaps over involvement in their children's extracurricular time. The term "Soccer Mom" developed, and the Millennials found their lives jammed with music lessons, sports, club meetings, and play dates. Leisure time became a misnomer, as every spare moment lost its freedom to the determination of Generation X to revolve their lives around their children.

³⁷Filipczak, Raines, and Zemke, 23.

Not all of the values Generation X imparted to the Millennials were detrimental, however. The importance of cultivating friendships and protecting those relationships became a key distinguishing feature in Millennials as it was for their parents. “Personal relationships count. Institutions don’t.”³⁸ This generation took their parents’ ideals to an even higher level. While Generation X utilized institutions to finance their personal lives and hence rendered them a measure of respect, Millennials do not hold any regard for institutions. To them, institutions do not matter—it’s all about the relationships. “The influence of friends on our value development is most intense during the socialization stage.”³⁹ When you consider the vast importance Millennials place on relationships and hence the weight with which they will consider the advice, value systems or life habits of friends, it is vital that they choose safe and healthy friends during the vital stage of adolescent development. If their friendship circles do not include adults, they may easily be led astray by those possessing no more experience, wisdom or self-control than they themselves possess. This illustrates the vital need for mentoring this precious generation and should serve as a wakeup call to those who value the welfare of the youth.

It must be re-iterated that the Millennial generation values relationships more than institutions, which greatly affects their view of religion and the church. “Spiritual truth may take many forms.”⁴⁰ This aptly describes the view that Millennials hold of biblical truths and religious traditions that previous generations had considered indispensable to their spiritual health. To this generation, it is all about the relationship and not a bit about

³⁸Hicks and Hicks, 285.

³⁹Ibid., 33.

⁴⁰Ibid., 286.

“truth.” They view truth as relative and personal, varying from person to person. If it’s true to you, then it’s truth. This explains how Millennials can claim their religion as Buddhist Baptist, two terms which meld flawlessly in their psyche but which are conflicting terms to previous generations. While older folks scratch their heads in confusion or shake their heads in disapproval, the Millennials respond, “Hey man. Don’t knock my beliefs.” They do not believe in absolute truth, and are firmly convicted that the greatest sin is that of passing judgment on another individual for their personal truth. Society has moved from delineated beliefs to the lack of any solid belief, from tolerating very few gray areas to allowing for nearly every area to be open to interpretation. “This is a generation that questions everything!”⁴¹ Spiritually speaking, this can be very dangerous. Yet this focus on relationships also offers an opportunity that could not be so widely utilized in previous generations to whom relationships were not all-encompassing. This generation’s affinity for relationships leads them directly into the open arms of the Savior who is longing for an intimate relationship with them appeals to the very core of their natures. This aspect of Christ’s passion strikes a chord for Millennials to whom relationships are everything, more than it did for previous generations who often followed the path of truth in their search for the Savior. “Today’s postmodern believers would rather experience spiritual truths than read about them.”⁴² Hence a Millennial will never be won to the faith by an explanation of truth, regardless of the myriad references or historical data. They must instead be drawn into a personal relationship with an

⁴¹Lancaster and Stillman, 230.

⁴²Hendricks, 3.

ambassador for God who will then lead them to the waiting arms of Christ and teach them to walk daily in His presence.

It must be warned, however, that Millennials possess the uncanny ability to sense when someone is faking concern, which is a surprising skill considering their limited experience with personal interactions due to their dependence upon technological communications. Millennials may not know the truth, but they can sense when someone does not possess it and is attempting to cover up that fact. They long for people to be honest with them, and respect the simple admittance that someone simply may not know the answer at the time. “If you want to remember just one key word to describe Millennials, it’s realistic.”⁴³ Hence it is vital to be perceived by Millennials as genuine and ‘real’ in order to maintain a healthy relationship with them and reach them effectively for Christ.

Generational Conflicts

“If you’re having conflicts with someone from a different generation, the cause is most likely rooted in the core differences of your values.”⁴⁴ Value systems influence nearly every aspect of a person’s life, from their methods of decision making to the structuring of their priorities and the energy they choose to invest in their daily challenges. Hence it becomes apparent that the varying value systems across the generations can cause varying methods of dealing with the same issues, which can cause conflict and misunderstandings. The same actions, when viewed through the eyes of

⁴³Lancaster and Stillman, 30.

⁴⁴Hicks and Hicks, 5.

different people, can seem to indicate varying motives. It is very important, then, that one considers any course of action that appears to hold a negative connotation from the viewpoint of the individual who chose that course of action and not from their own experiences and motives.

It seems that some of the greatest conflicts arising between generations stem from stereotyping all members of a generation into a one size fits all mold and looking no further for potential variances. "Asking about race or religion is taboo. But when it comes to generations stereotyping, anything goes."⁴⁵ Studying the generations can provide insights into some commonalities of a generation, but it does not provide a free pass to group all members of a generation into a single stereotype. This practice causes much more harm than benefit.

Also, the study of generations often leads to a focus on the negative aspects without giving proper attention to the positive aspects. Often individuals focus on the differences and struggle to 'fix' those problem areas. "And we do look at each other negatively."⁴⁶ This is one of the core sources of intergenerational conflicts as individuals use their knowledge of generational characteristics to browbeat their rivals with demeaning accusations instead of searching for understanding in an effort to morph an antagonistic relationship into a mutually beneficial symbiosis. It is important to consider one's ultimate goal of segregation or unity and to act accordingly, remembering that difficult situations are temporary, but harsh feelings can persist beyond the situation's resolution.

⁴⁵Lancaster and Stillman, 42.

⁴⁶Ibid., 17.

“Probably one of the biggest obstacles between wanting to help kids and actually becoming a mentor is the generation gap.”⁴⁷ Human beings tend to migrate toward those with whom they have much in common. Hence the well known proverb, “Birds of a feather flock together.” People enjoy the security of discussing issues with the prior knowledge that their opinions will be well-received and understood. This likelihood increases when others share the same background, experiences, values and points of view, and hence those people naturally migrate to socializing together. This is seen even in the city parks on lazy summer afternoons as children play on the swings, youth mingle on the basketball courts, young adults fill the baseball diamonds and older folks rest on the benches. “The extracurricular activities that do exist within communities have become increasingly age segregated, further limiting opportunities for intergenerational contact.”⁴⁸ This tragedy is also seen quite readily in the church setting. In earlier years churches were separated by religious beliefs and perhaps ethnic cultures, but now congregations are often separated along generational lines. Many churches now include separate services for children, youth and adults, and sometimes even the young adults. When these segments break off, the unity of the church suffers. The congregation ceases to be one united body in the worship of Christ and instead becomes three or four congregations merely worshipping in the same church building. This can be detrimental to the health of each segment, as well as to the church body as a whole. If the church segregates itself, then any attempt at mingling is often met with suspicion and perhaps even intolerance. “Any overtures adults themselves make toward youth are likely to be

⁴⁷Fry, 92.

⁴⁸Rhodes, 13.

perceived and responded to quite differently depending on the young person's state of receptiveness."⁴⁹ If the older generations do not generally mingle with the youth, then any change in that behavior fosters mistrust. However, churches which have already become segregated are not doomed to failure. With continued efforts and genuine sincerity, boundaries can be crossed and friendships forged.

Some may argue that catering to the various generations of the church encourage church growth and health. "Are the generation-specific approaches by both [Baby] Boomers and Busters expanding the kingdom of God, or are they merely breaking it into bite-sized components?"⁵⁰ The younger generations need the wisdom of the older generations and the older generations need the vigor of the younger generations. When people are open to sharing differing views and values, then they are open to growth, to fulfilling fellowship, and to healthier spirituality. "A block to anyone's creative leadership is isolation, having no one in whom to confide."⁵¹ When churches are segmented, one of the core motivations for Christ establishing the church, being the unification of His people, is thwarted. The apostle Paul wrote in Phil 2:1-4, "If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from His love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others." The key to satisfying

⁴⁹Rhodes, 31.

⁵⁰Rabey, 30.

⁵¹Sinetar, 39.

the various needs of the different generations is not segregation but compromise and prioritizing. Is worship style truly worth church division? Can any one individual, regardless of their standing in the church books, truly have a monopoly on understanding Christ's direction for His church? Christ exhorted His followers to serve each other, not to vie for power and authority. "You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:42-45).

Another area of conflict between generations, especially in the church setting, is control. "Many pastors are petrified about giving away any area of key leadership."⁵² When an individual allows another to gain control over a situation, they risk an outcome other than they would have chosen. This not only fails to allow others to flourish, but also causes the individual to become overworked and frazzled. It is necessary to allow everyone the privilege of involvement, regardless of their level of talent or skill. The church belongs not to the equipped, but to the called, and only by gaining experience can one develop competence. It is also imperative that members more skilled in the areas of church leadership mentor those who are learning the intricacies. This usually requires generational interdependence. "It [the study] suggests that adolescents' capacity for critical thinking and self-awareness can be increased through ongoing conversations on meaningful topics with their mentors."⁵³ Mentors must take the first step and start the

⁵²Rabey, 176.

⁵³Rhodes, 44.

conversation so youth feel invited into the intimate relationship of mentoring. When generations choose to work together, God can use that association to work powerfully for the benefit of the church and the world. "You can provide the resources a child might otherwise never discover; you can teach him/her to seek, recognize, and act on opportunities."⁵⁴ When youth feel the support of a trusted adult, they are much more willing to step out into the unknown and experience new horizons, which in turn broaden the horizons and enriches the life of the adult. "The only way we'll ever build bridges is to stop stereotyping and get to know who these generations really are and why they are that way."⁵⁵

Generational Commonalities

"Generationally savvy organizations value the differences between people and look at differences as strengths."⁵⁶ When people change the habit of focusing on the negative implications of generational differences and instead consciously strive toward commending and utilizing strengths, society will benefit in spades. There are many common facets between the generations to provide a launching platform. For instance, the Baby Boomers and the Xers each boast strong loyalties, only the Baby Boomers loyalty is to the task while the Xers place their loyalty in relationships. By understanding those tendencies and blending them into solidarity, both tasks and relationships for both generations benefit. When approached honestly, commonalities can be found across

⁵⁴Fry, 91.

⁵⁵Lancaster and Stillman, 17.

⁵⁶Filipczak, Raines, and Zemke, 154.

every supposed gap, and building on those commonalities will forge connections that can bridge differences and allow for respect and support instead of annoyance and evasion. As Carolyn Martin states in her book *Managing the Generation Mix*, the wise will “Leverage Uniqueness.”⁵⁷ Instead of allowing differences to create fear and mistrust, they should be viewed as opportunities to better one’s own character by learning from the strengths and insights of others. Everyone has been granted different assets, from the experience of age to the innovation of youth. Paul exhorts us in Eph 4:11-12 that “He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” Since Christ Himself endowed each of us with different talents, skills, personalities, experiences, visions, and ambitions with the express purpose of unifying His people, allowing those differences to instead segment the church is not only dangerous but perhaps even a form of heresy.

The first step toward uniting the generations is educating them about the history, strengths and challenges of each. People are afraid of the unknown and by removing that shroud of mystery, barriers are destroyed and the way is cleared for unification. “The only way we’ll ever build bridges is to stop stereotyping and get to know who these generations really are and why they are that way.”⁵⁸ Through education people will not only gain a clearer understanding of the viewpoints of others, but they will also gain a clearer vision of the motives behind their own tendencies. This will give them a vision of

⁵⁷Carolyn A. Martin and Bruce Tulgan, *Managing the Generation Mix* (Amherst, MA: HRD Press, 2002), 67.

⁵⁸Lancaster and Stillman, 17.

themselves as others view them, which allows for greater awareness of the world beyond their own sphere. This education does not stem only from books, but more effectively from spending quality time with others and making a concerted effort to communicate openly with the express purpose of understanding and being understood. "In aggressive communication, generational conflicts and potential conflicts are anticipated and surfaced. Generational differences are based primarily on unarticulated assumptions and unconscious criteria; therefore, surfacing them takes a giant step toward resolving them."⁵⁹ Without addressing the issues that divide the generations, there is no opportunity to bridge those gaps and forge mentoring relationships. Honest communication with a heart longing to connect is the key to building a successful relationship.

Unfortunately the road to a healthy relationship is often fraught with personal disparities can regrettably sabotage the fledging connection. Too often people regress to prior habits of forming judgments rather than investing the emotional energy, and sometimes personal pride, into conceding that others' differences simply make them different and nothing more or less. "The problem with hasty judgments is that, once you have decided, that something is true, you look for evidence to support your opinion, even ignoring evidence to the contrary."⁶⁰ Once people gain a little bit of knowledge, they often jump to conclusions. The well known proverb says it best, "A little knowledge is a dangerous thing." The natural desire of human beings is to solve puzzles, to unravel mysteries, and this often leads to wrong conclusions simply because those conclusions

⁵⁹Filipczak, Raines, and Zemke, 153.

⁶⁰Hicks and Hicks, 323.

were the nearest and simplest. Investing research, time and a bit of cognitive energy often seems too great an investment when an easy answer looms so temptingly within immediate reach. “The concept of understanding, as we are using it is not merely to comprehend or grasp the meaning of something, but it also involves having a sympathetic or tolerant attitude toward something or someone.”⁶¹ People also tend toward delineated thinking, requiring that there be a right and wrong instead of simply different views from which to approach the same issue. To further complicate matters, people’s viewpoints are often skewed by their own experiences which have not, of course, been shared by everyone, further distancing their viewpoints from those of others. Yet people can bridge those gaps by sharing their experiences, by communicating their backgrounds, their reasoning and their emotions. This sharing must be reciprocated in order to be truly successful. “To get into the mentoring partner’s world, we have to let them into our world.”⁶² Only then can progress can be made toward unifying the body of Christ in love.

However, beginning this process of sharing the intimacies of our core self is fearful and complex. It reveals vulnerabilities that can be dangerous in the hands of the enemy, and so people have learned through pain and rejection to guard these vulnerabilities as one would guard a fragile jewel. Yet vulnerability is also a necessary key to building a lasting relationship. It is a risk that must be taken if one is to open their hearts to others in the manner of Christ and lead others into His kingdom. The revealing of one’s soul often leads others to feel secure enough to venture the same, and so

⁶¹Hicks and Hicks, 322.

⁶²Stoddard, 63.

camaraderie is cultivated and yields precious harvest. "Throughout their lives, productive individuals grow increasingly authentic.

You might say they relax into who they are and realize their creative powers without the phoniness so common to some others."⁶³ To be effective in the ministry of Christ, indeed to be effective in life at large, people must learn the art of being real. It most certainly is not necessary to reveal one's entire soul to a stranger in the hopes of building instantaneously the friendship of a lifetime, but it is necessary to reveal only what is real. "Kids respond to what they see, he said. If they see a life of holiness and not just theory or preaching, they will grab on to that."⁶⁴ In his book *A Hand to Guide Me*, Denzel Washington reveals his experience in a mentoring relationship, "He treated me with great respect, and he expected great respect in return. That was always a big thing- treating people how you want to be treated."⁶⁵ When the goal is to make a real difference in the life of another, there is no greater ingredient than to above all else be completely and thoroughly real from the surface to the core.

"From the time we are infants, we have a built-in need and desire for significant relationships."⁶⁶ To truly receive the understanding and acceptance that people were created to desire, they must offer the same to others. This comes with great personal risk and requires the commitment of resources, emotion, and time. Relationships require consistent prioritizing if they are to thrive. Allotting five minutes a month for the sake of

⁶³Sineta, 53.

⁶⁴Rabey, 128.

⁶⁵Washington, 54.

⁶⁶Stoddard, 38.

a mentee will have little impact, and may even cause more harm than benefit as it will send the very real message that the relationship merits only such a small fraction of time, and hence that the mentee merits only such a few trivial moments. The time spent with a mentee need not be always reflective, always emotional, or even always structured. “When people have fun together, tensions ease and generation gaps get bridged.”⁶⁷ Bouts of laughter often provide the most healing, and simply being together and having the opportunity for sharing cultivates familiarity and comfort. Certainly there will be times of serious dialogue and real problems will surface that must be addressed, but relationships that require only work will be avoided instead of sought after and savored.

Conclusion

Bridging the generation gaps will require understanding and acceptance, and also a great deal of time. Changing the habits of a lifetime do not come readily, and even learning to twist one’s own perceptions in order to fully comprehend another’s realities is a skill that requires practice and patience. Fully comprehending one’s own realities in order to lead another to that same understanding takes even greater practice and patience. Yet these skills can be cultivated and mastered, with great reward for those willing to invest in the cause. The ultimate goal is perhaps best expressed by David Stoddard in his book *The Heart of Mentoring* when he writes, “Don’t walk behind me, I will not lead. Don’t walk in front of me, I will not follow. Just walk beside me and be my friend.”⁶⁸ This is the greatest need of every generation.

⁶⁷Lancaster and Stillman, 148.

⁶⁸Stoddard, 64.

CHAPTER 4

KNOWING IS HALF THE BATTLE

Introduction

The following chapter presents the seminar held at the beginning of the school year before faculty families had begun. The timing of the seminar allowed for teachers to focus on the subject matter at hand, as normal school responsibilities such as grading papers and supervision were not yet an issue. The faculty responded to the seminar positively, with many feeling moved by the possibilities of the mentoring program. However, an acute emotional response does not always result in purposeful action as surveys taken at the beginning and end of the school year regarding the faculty family program will demonstrate. While some faculty set forth specific goals and strived to meet the emotional, spiritual and at times academic needs of their family unit, other faculty did not meet with the same level of success either by their own standards nor the standards of their students.

Gaining Knowledge

Before pursuing any course of action, it is first necessary to gain the proper information in deciding that course. While this may seem to be common sense, in fact it is a seldom heeded warning. "Ninety-five percent of CEOs haven't a clue why their

companies exist.”¹ To complicate matters, the most easily accessible information is often considered without further investigation. This can prove detrimental, as the most easily accessible information is not always the most accurate. “An herbicide kills because it is a hormone that gives the plant bad information. It tells the plant to grow faster than its capacity to absorb nutrients allows. It literally grows itself to death because its information base is wrong.”² Perhaps the famous Generation X icon G. I. Joe said it best, “Knowing is half the battle!”

The opportunity to gain knowledge has been available for all four of the generations previously addressed, and each generation has responded to that opportunity in a bid to find success. So it is in the call of mentoring. Knowledge is needed if success is to be expected. Henry David Thoreau once observed, “In the long run, men hit only what they aim at.”³ However, it is also true that the effectiveness of any hunter aiming at a target is greatly enhanced by the equipment used. This chapter presents a seminar that provides not only a vision of the target but also the knowledge (or equipment) necessary for developing and maintaining a healthy and effective mentoring relationship. Before beginning the seminar, however, it is first necessary to “understand and appreciate that the journey is as important as the destination.”⁴ A mentor’s ultimate goal is to aptly prepare others for the heavenly kingdom. This goal is not a fixed point, but an always metamorphosing objective fraught with rewards and challenges. Mentoring can often be

¹Martin and Tulgan, 60.

²Leonard Sweet, *SoulTsunami: Sink or Swim in New Millennium Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999), 147.

³Tony Dungy, *The Mentor Leader* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2010), 53.

⁴*Ibid.*, 29.

frustrating because there is no quick fix, but the encouraging truth is that mentoring is not about trying to fix others. Instead mentoring strives to journey with others, providing them access to previous life experiences, psychological encouragement, and spiritual support. It is also necessary before engaging in a mentoring relationship to first understand one's own position in life, what personal quirks may impede the relationship, and from what viewpoint one approaches the intricacies of life. This seminar can provide introspective knowledge which can sharpen the ability to mentor more effectively and avoid pitfalls which otherwise may have gone unnoticed until the damage was irreversible. "Understanding the generations can be a strategic tool that is relatively easy to work with and can actually be fun."⁵ Everyone views the world differently even when experiencing the exact same situation, so it then stands to reason that everyone reacts differently. Hence it is first necessary to establish personal views so that others' perspectives may be better understood, allowing for better understanding of their motives and methods of making decisions. To lead another in any direction, it is first necessary to meet them where they are and to understand why they have chosen their previous paths, enabling you to appropriately influence them to choose positive paths in the future.

The Need for Relationships

"From the time we are infants, we have a built-in need and desire for significant relationships."⁶ This was not always believed to be the case. Early in the 1900s, scientists argued that outward displays of affection were not only unnecessary but

⁵Lancaster and Stillman, 43.

⁶Stoddard, 38.

perhaps even detrimental, leading to the communication of diseases and even psychological abnormalities upon reaching adulthood. Harry Harlow, an American psychologist in the 1960s, believed the opposite was true. He believed the relationship between mother and child went far beyond fulfilling the basic needs of nourishment and safety. His experiments with rhesus monkeys validated his beliefs, as baby monkeys turned to a surrogate mother formed from wire for their basic needs but spent much more time with the terrycloth surrogate mother who did not provide for any basic needs. In a later experiment he discovered that young monkeys, while in the presence of their mothers, would thoroughly explore a brand new room. When their mothers were removed from the area, however, they would seem to lose their sense of security and revert to huddling, rocking, screaming and crying.

Unfortunately, Harlow's findings were reinforced in the human realm when the dictatorship of Nicolae Ceausescu in Romania was toppled by a coup in 1989. Ceausescu did not believe in physical touch and drew focus away from the fields of psychology and social work with the intent of intensifying study in the fields of science and engineering. He established policies to increase the birth rate in his country and founded orphanages not only for children without parents, but also for children whose parents could not care for them instead of establishing policies to aid the parents' ability to provide. He moved the system away from foster or adoptive parenting and streamlined children into mass institutions. When Ceausescu's regime ended, the tragic effects of these policies came to light. The children exhibited characteristics strikingly similar to those of Harlow's monkeys. "They rocked and grasped themselves like Harlow's monkeys, and grew up

with weird social values and behavior.”⁷ They exhibited severe deficiencies in their motor skills and mental development, and ranked in the third to tenth percentile for physical growth. But for the purpose of this paper, the most interesting effects were demonstrated in their personalities. Neuroscientist Mary Carlson, who studied under Harry Harlow, described the children as “clumsy [and] sad,” stating that they exhibited “all inappropriate” social interactions. Smiling and ingratiating, the youths are superficially friendly but unable to form permanent attachments. This indicates the vital importance of providing tangible emotional support, the lack of which alters a person from their outside characteristics even to their very core traits. Hence it can be easily concluded that mentoring is not a luxury in the lives of developing youth, but an absolute necessity for both their immediate and lifelong well-being. This is most especially true for those lacking parents and those separated from their parents by necessity, including those in foster care or dormitory accommodations.

The Generation Gap

“Probably one of the biggest obstacles between wanting to help kids and actually becoming a mentor is the generation gap.”⁸ Perspectives vary widely across the generations, even when confronted with the exact same event. Therefore it is necessary, before attempting to relate to another person, first to consider situations from their unique perspective. This requires familiarity with their values, their emotional state and at times their previous actions in comparable circumstances. It also requires a willingness to step

⁷Terry Devitt, “The Science of Mother’s Day,” April 1998, <http://www.whyfiles.org/087mother/4.html> (accessed 10 October 2010).

⁸Fry, 92.

outside of one's own comfort zone, considering opinions which may be personally upsetting or confusing. It requires a desire to overcome one's preconceptions, gaining a knowledge and understanding of those with whom one may have very little in common. "The only way we'll ever build bridges is to stop stereotyping and get to know who these generations really are and why they are that way."⁹ Without this knowledge and understanding, it is nearly impossible to convert simply hearing another person to truly listening and responding appropriately. Purposeful mentoring requires the same preparation as other fields of ministry, and can lead to a great harvest for the kingdom of God. Let there be no underestimation of the need for mentoring. "Approximately half of all young people in the United States today are considered at risk."¹⁰ When I graduated high school just barely two decades ago, 90 percent of my class came from a two parent home. The class that graduated in 2010 from my local Adventist boarding academy had only 70 percent of its students coming from two parent homes. These statistics only represent one risk factor. Today's youth have an enormous need for mentoring, and hence dedicated mentors are invaluable. Such a great calling deserves appropriate groundwork in order to be effective and beneficial. Hence it is imperative that mentors gain the knowledge and foundational understanding to enable them to utilize their mentoring opportunities to their greatest fulfillment.

How Generations Are Formed

Before discussing the basic characteristics of the various generations, it is first

⁹Lancaster and Stillman, 17.

¹⁰Fry, 20.

helpful to investigate the influences that form a generation's distinctive qualities. As an old Irish proverb says "you've got to do your own growing, no matter how tall your grandfather was."¹¹ This is especially true in the case of generational differences. Some family traits are, of course, passed down through family bloodlines. However, the world in which generations experience adolescence can be hardly recognizable for their parents or grandparents, or even their children, resulting in a different manner of perceiving reality. Consider the various events which land marked the decades. For a more expanded version, please see appendix 2. Growing up during the 1940s meant growing through war. Nearly every adolescent lost someone they knew, perhaps even a family member, to World War II. There was never a question about whether a young man would go to war when he turned eighteen—it was understood and expected. Also during this time everyone conserved a variety of staples to benefit the war effort. The teenage years were focused on the war and its effects. Fathers were most likely away fighting in the war and the family could perhaps hear from him through a letter that he had written a month earlier. Students would practice drills for a nuclear fallout in the event that the city came under attack. Youth fully believed in the leadership of the country and were taught never to question authority but to follow orders to the smallest letter. Now consider the present decade. Once again the nation is at war, but the war and its effects are vastly different. Most people have not lost even an acquaintance let alone a family member to the war, although some may know soldiers who have been deployed. Even when a family member is deployed, modern technology has made it possible to 'see' them every night through the miracle of video conferencing through the internet. Some

¹¹Dungy, 1.

do not know of someone that has been killed. You might know of someone that is over there. At school the war is perhaps studied, but students most certainly do not practice for a possible attack. In fact, it seems to many people in the United States that the war has not even truly affected them, and to a great degree they are correct. Most of the American public continues life while hardly giving the war a thought unless they are discussing politics or hear of casualties through the media. In terms of the country's leadership, youth not only question their ability but even their morality and their motives. The leaders are no longer heroes and are most definitely not put on a pedestal but are often times looked down upon as scandal after scandal reveals that their flaws were well hidden behind shrouds weaved by public relations professionals. Now consider that one person who grew up in these modern times joins the workforce with another person who grew up in the 1940s, and the manager of the business makes a poor decision that affects the workers. Will these two individuals react in the same way since it is the same boss, the same decision, and the same repercussions? Perhaps it is surprising, or perhaps not, that their reactions are likely to be drastically different because of the diverse worlds they experienced as adolescents.

Generations are formed when a group of adolescents from generally similar backgrounds experience the same world events. Values are shaped during the teenage years and are only mildly altered during the course of a lifetime, barring tragic events in one's personal life. This information can help individuals learn the reasoning behind their decision-making processes, and can also broaden their understanding of other people's decision-making processes and lead to greater tolerance. The ability to tolerate others is also greatly affected, however, by how you believe others perceive you. "A

majority of teenagers concurred that each of seven adjectives accurately depicts how adults think of teens. Tellingly, five of the seven adjectives are negative: lazy (which 84 percent of teens said was an attribute that most adults linked to teenagers); rude (74 percent); sloppy (70 percent); dishonest (65 percent); and violent (57 percent). The two positive attributes were friendly (63 percent); and intelligent (58 percent). In addition, about half (48 percent) contend that adults view teens as being pessimistic about the future.”¹² When one believes they are being labeled and misjudged, their defenses rise and their own tolerance disintegrates. Hence, it is imperative that generations are not stereotyped, that judgment on an individual’s character is reserved until they are better known, and that characteristics are viewed in light of the individual’s past experiences. It is these past experiences that to a great degree distinguish the generations, and gaining knowledge of them should not encourage stereotyping but should lead the generations into a sympathetic understanding with each other and provide a foundation for an attitude of acceptance. Then, building on this foundation, it will be possible to move beyond the surface generalities and delve more deeply into the personality of the individual, building positive relationships and strengthening each other in fellowship.

Knowing Your Generation

Below is a chart of the generations and their generic qualities, as well as an introduction, *Defining Characteristics of Generations*, from the author.

Please note that these must necessarily be *generalizations*, and no one person will completely fit the exact generational picture represented below. Please also note that since the defining part of a person’s life is between ages 5 and 20, the various *historical events* described below are placed under the generation that was 5-20 years old when it happened. In the case of Gen-X and Millennial, this is often not as clear,

¹²George Barna, *Real Teens* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2001), 54.

but rather I have looked at what is affecting younger teenagers (Millennial) and older teens and Young Adults (Gen-X). There may be times when an event should overlap and influence more than one generational group.¹³

Characteristic	Generation			
	Silent 1920-1942	Boomer 1943-1962	Gen-X 1963-1982	Millennial 1983-2000?
Politics				
War	World War II, Korea	Vietnam	Vietnam In Britain: Falklands In South Africa: Angola, internal freedom struggle	Yugoslavia-Czechoslovakia-Bosnia Many internal, civil wars around the world
International Political Situation	World War II – politics on a global scale, with single, international focus	Cold War – East vs. West Bay of Pigs International terrorism at a height, and rise of “terrorist states” (e.g. Libya) Nuclear threat	Berlin war comes down, communism dies. Economic pressure used by international community to enforce their will	Rise of China and the East – Hong Kong hand back. The rapidly falling power of the UN
Politicians and Political Activists active at height of the generation (i.e., during Rising Adulthood)	Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin, Hitler, Jan Smuts (RSA) <i>These were charismatic, inspiring, idealist figureheads – “men for the times”. People wanted inspiration and</i>	John F Kennedy, Mao Tse Tung, Brezhnev, Nixon, Malan (RSA), Martin Luther King, Mandela, Biko, Malcolm X (<i>all were civil rights activists</i>). <i>Inspiring leaders, taking their nations to a glorious future. However, the attitude to the activists as well as some major blunders (Bay of Pigs, Watergate)</i>	Thatcher, Reagan, Bush, Gorbachev, Mitterand, de Klerk (RSA) Walensa (Poland) (<i>a unionist and political activist</i>) <i>Most of these leaders brought about sweeping reforms. They are not held in high regard, since previous generations have their politic heritage removed, and people don't like change.</i>	Major, Clinton, Blair, Mandela <i>These leaders are “mostly harmless.” Not seen to carry much power, and largely ignored. Not inspirational. These politicians are elected BECAUSE they are perceived to be less threatening.</i>

¹³Graeme Codington, “Comparing the Generations from Silent through Boomer to Xer and Y,” July 8, 2010, <http://www.connectioneconomy.com/2010/07/08/comparing-the-generations-from-silent-through-boomer-to-xer-and-y.html> (accessed 15 October 2010).

	<i>motivation.</i>	<i>removed the awe and trust of people. Many of these leaders were assassinated by discontent and disillusioned people.</i>		
Types of government	Inspiring and bold, yet controlling and authoritarian	Inspirational, dynamic, revolutionary	Libertarian, accountable, "transparent," consultative	Practical and pragmatic
Leadership styles that are best responded to	Process driven, pluralistic.	Righteous, austere. Exude confidence. Visionary.	Consultative. Pragmatic and cautious.	Grand, expansive.
Discrimination	Suffrage	Organized movement against discriminations, e.g. Feminism, racial discrimination- Martin Luther King, Mandela, Biko	Women seen more as equals – Thatcher; Gay rights become an issue; continued racial problems and immigrant problem; Rise of political correctness (PC)	A possible backlash against women, other races (e.g., immigration laws tightened), OR equality will be enforced
Technology	Silent	Boomer	Gen-X	Millennial
Computers	None	Mainframes <i>Computers were centralised in operation – terminals attached to a central hub</i>	1976 – Personal Computers (PC) <i>Computers became decentralised, stand alone</i>	Multimedia, Networking and Internet <i>Decentralised computers now joined together in Int'l network – same power as centralization, but retaining flexibility of decentralization</i>
Knowledge Base	Tremendous shifts in knowledge, especially from Newtonian physics – atomic	Space race – focus on the universe; science becomes more specialized, with less general	Scientific fields are incredibly specialized and only for a few experts – research done in teams, not as individuals – too much for one person to try and grasp and assimilate	There will be more emphasis on minutiae – less opportunity to be original

	theory, relativity, Heisenberg, medical advances	theorists		
School Learning Types of subjects Reflection of older generation, who are the educators	More emphasis on concrete (in the physical sciences) and on fine arts	Conceptual knowledge. Challenge everything and try to change things to be the way they "should" be.	Secondary education seen as preparation for tertiary, rather than an end in itself (i.e. not practically based).	Shift towards more technical and practical education. Life skills, socialization, "outcome based education", community training, civic mindedness. Emphasize science and engineering.
Global Village	Telephone	Satellite, TV	Fax, Cell phones, Computer Networks	Internet
Entertainment	Silent	Boomer	Gen-X	Millennial
Music	Swing, Big band	Rock 'n' Roll	Disco, Pop, Heavy Metal, MTV,	House, Rave, Grunge, MTV, Rap
Movies -cult movies and genres	Casablanca epics	War movies, westerns, spy movies (James Bond)	Sci-fi, Spielberg and Tarrantino	Horror, remakes
Fashion and fads	Formal – young people dress like adults, no real distinction between work and play clothes The different clothes represented merely social status and money, rather than differences in attitude or association.	More sexual dressing. Bell bottoms, stovepipes, leather, miniskirts, platforms, hippies, etc. The different groups were very distinctive, and identified clearly by the way they dressed.	Asexual. Very individual. Many different small groups identified by clothing, but clothes are no longer a distinctive identifier. Fashion is	Androgynous , bulky. Seems to be a return to a common "look", rather than the individuality of the Xers.

		Clothes indicated an attitude on other issues.	not used to make a statement.	
Type of entertainment	Clubs	Drugs, coffee shops	On-the-edge (e.g. bungi), bars	Friendship, relaxed and informal settings (Rave)
Sport	Amateur	Professionalism	Major money in advertising and appearance fees Sports people become amongst top earners	More sports will be making more money – and younger competitors will be involved
Media	Silent	Boomer	Gen-X	Millennial
Television	Experimental. 1927 – first TV broadcast in UK; 1928 – first sale to public (USA)	TV grows in status 1960 – 1st live sports game (football); first presidential debate in USA; 1957 – Sputnik was first satellite, used for radio and TV transmissions.	Satellite and cable TV in every home TV as primary new source for world news (e.g. CNN, Sky, etc.)	MTV – TV for young people, by young people – truly international
“Cult” (popular) TV shows	?	Star Trek (first series), games shows,	Star Trek: Next Generation, Beverly Hills 91210, Roseanne, Talk shows	X-files, Simpsons, Beavis & Butthead, MTV, CNN
Mass media	Newsreels (news and entertainment combined)	TV media	Media Blitz – CNN, Tabloids, advertising, etc.	Internet
Family	Silent	Boomer	Gen-X	Millennial
Family Life (what the parents do)	Many family businesses – families stay together for longer	Busy father – absent and always	Both parents working; single parent	??

		working	(working) families; disrupted.	
Youth-Parent Attachment	Obedient to both	Strongest to mother	Independent of both	Strongest to father
View of Marriage	High	An option	Low and negative view	??
Age of marriage	Young	Older	Oldest	Getting younger again
Attitude to elders	Do what are told without question	Rebellion	Not interested	Obedient, and wanting to interact
View of retirement	"The Golden Years"	"A chance to write that novel..."	"The agonizing slide into abject poverty"	"A daily struggle to survive in a polluted world"
Everyday Life/Other	Silent	Boomer	Gen-X	Millennial
Economics	Great Depression	Cold War = Capitalism vs. socialism Inflation becomes a real problem for the first time in modern history	Death of socialism, capitalism seen as best method of economics – yet has serious loopholes, which are exploited by some.	Capitalism rules in America, but the poor part of the world gets poorer.
Job Opportunities	Limited, and falling in Great Depression.	Many new jobs available – especially for men	No jobs available. If do get job, will be less likely to get a promotion. This is the first generation in America's history who will earn less than their parents.	Limited.
View of future	Uncertain, resulting in passivity	Optimistic, resulting in activity	Pessimistic, resulting in a passive attitude	Realistic and pragmatic – resulting in activity
"Lost Idol"	James Dean	Jim Morrison	Kurt Cobain	?
"The Man"	Cary Grant	Paul McCartney	Brad Pitt	Bart Simpson

"The Woman"	Marilyn Monroe	Raquel Welch	Julia Roberts	Sheryl Crow and Sandra Bullock
Gender Roles (male/female relationships)	Most polarized	Begin breakdown of polarization and fight for equality	Androgynous behavior	Polarization begins again
Morality	High morals	Testing the limits (e.g. drug abuse, free sex). Reform in midlife (even legislating against excesses of their own youth).	Reaction against hypocrisy of Boomers – be true to self – individual morality.	?
Sex	Sex outside of marriage is considered sinful and even dirty.	The Pill – free sex; Profumo sex scandal (UK); sex is for fun. Rise of sexuality in public and acceptance thereof	AIDS – sex as a threat	Seems to be sex for fun, or even in order to achieve the thrill of cheating death (AIDS)
Eating habits	Great Depression and war: Rations, survival important	Abundance, variety, processed food, manufacturing bulk, microwave invented in UK in 1948	Fast foods, microwave meals	"Meals for one" packages, snack foods, vitamin supplements
Grocery Shopping	Corner green grocer	Local shops	Supermarket, hypermarket	Fast food outlet
Attitude to Religion	A part of life. Something that everyone does. Part of organized religion.	Practical approach eclipses God. No room for metaphysical. "Death of God" philosophy. If religious, then universalist and optimistic.	Pessimistic, "even God can't help us now". Do not deny religion, but don't see its value. Agnosticism at a height. Anti the religious establishment.	Heightened spirituality. Alternative spiritual experiences are sought. Confidence in metaphysical and spirit world. Tolerant of

		Wary of organized religion.		organized religion.
General	Silent	Boomer	Gen-X	Millennial
Characteristic Attitude	genteel, thoughtful, social stewardship	prophetic, challenging	roguish, individualistic	heroic, builders, work together in groups
Motto	love	truth	persuasion	power
Positive attributes	experts, caring, open minded	principled, resolute, creative, idealistic	savvy, diverse, perceptive, practical,	rational, selfless, competent
Negative attributes	indecisive, guilt-ridden, neurotic	ruthless, selfish, arrogant, two-faced	pessimistic, pecuniary, amoral, uncultured	overbold, unreflective, insensitive

Figure 1. Generations and their generic qualities. *Source:* Graeme Codington, "Comparing the Generations from Silent through Boomer to Xer and Y," July 8, 2010, <http://www.connectioneconomy.com/2010/07/08/comparing-the-generations-from-silent-through-boomer-to-xer-and-y.html> (accessed 15 October 2010)

Each generation has a vital trait that is key to the success of an effective mentoring relationship. "Traditionalists could best be described by a single word: loyal."¹⁴ Individuals in this generation have a great tendency to support a program or a leader even when they may not agree with their direction or decisions. This characteristic, however, is an asset for mentoring, as people's progress can be slow and oftentimes staggered. Traditionalists have faith that success is always just around the corner, and they continue to strive for victory. Instead of giving up when a breakthrough could be just ahead, this generation perseveres and fights to make possible what could have been easily forsaken.

¹⁴Lancaster and Stillman, 19.

“The key word for Boomers is optimistic.”¹⁵ “This generation loves to be challenged.”¹⁶ These two factors are necessary for effective mentoring. It is not easy to keep a positive outlook when the situation seems disconcerting, nor is it easy to strive for a specific outcome when it seems all influences are pushing against that end. This generation can be especially effective with teenagers, as teenagers enjoy challenging adults and provoking reactions. This generation keeps the bigger picture in the forefront and places all other details in the proper perspective. As a teenager I experimented with my hair in a variety of ways, including a perm and bleaching. I watched for my parents’ reactions, yet they never responded in the uproarious manner I had expected. Their viewpoint was that hair grows out. They realized the temporary nature of my actions and chose bigger battles instead. They were able to overlook a situation where others may have felt threatened, and hence they saved their energies and their instruction for more important matters. This also caused me to feel very much accepted and safe in my relationship with them and improved our rapport, giving me the courage to approach them with real problems for their input and support.

“Xers greatest fear is that they might become stagnant.”¹⁷ “New rule #1: Personal relationships count. Institutions don’t.”¹⁸ These characteristics of Generation X—their loyalty to people instead of institutions and their constant need for change—can either be an asset or a liability in the realm of mentoring. From the positive perspective, they

¹⁵Ibid., 21.

¹⁶Ibid., 57.

¹⁷Lancaster and Stillman, 58.

¹⁸Hicks and Hicks, 285.

always strive for a fresh approach to their relationship with their mentee. On the other hand, they are often quick to bail when the relationship becomes stagnant, which can do immeasurable damage to the mentee who depends on them. This explains the vital importance of Generation Xer's gaining a full understanding of themselves and their tendencies before pursuing a mentoring relationship, so they can avoid the pitfalls so prevalent to their personalities and instead strive to overcome those deficiencies for the sake of their mentees. By realizing their lack of loyalty to institutions (such as the institution of mentoring) but also realizing their deep and abiding loyalty to relationships (such as that between a mentor and mentee), Generation Xer's can strive to develop the relationship and view it as such and not as a program or a goal.

Knowing Your Mentee's Generation

"The cries of young people today are for acceptance, belonging, security, love and justice."¹⁹ This statement rings true for every generation, and a healthy society strives to value every individual. However, the generation most in need of mentoring in this modern society is the Millennial Generation. While it is true that yet another generation is on the verge of adolescence, that generation is more in need of acceptance and love by society in general (and their family specifically) than of conscientious guidance from outside sources. With this in mind, it is important to keep a few core truths in the forefront when choosing to mentor a Millennial. "If you want to remember just one key word to describe Millennials, it's realistic."²⁰ The Millennial Generation has the innate

7.¹⁹Dean Borgman, *When Kumbaya Is Not Enough* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997),

²⁰Lancaster and Stillman, 30.

ability to decipher a counterfeit, and they immediately lose respect for those whom they believe are not playing straight with them. This insistence on dealing only with reality can be a help or a hindrance. On the one hand, they understand the time crunch of daily life. They are very understanding of multiple responsibilities, as many of them grew up with a myriad of after school activities. They understand that even the best of intentions cannot always be realized, and this is not due to lack of desire or investment but simply a sad fact of life. On the other hand, their perceived reality can steal their hope and their ambition. If they do not consider achieving high marks academically to be within their realm of possibility, they see no reason to try. Thus they need a great deal of encouragement and even a bit of vision from someone they believe and trust.

Another core trait of Millennials is their preference for groups over one-on-one interactions. "Millennials are gravitating toward group activity."²¹ For other generations, only one-on-one interactions seem to carry depth and meaning while group activities are more geared toward casual fun. Hence when a Millennial insists upon bringing friends to activities, those from other generations may feel discouraged and wonder if they are connecting with their mentee. It is important to realize that Millennials do not feel this way. It is wise, when mentoring Millennials, to encourage group activities and to plan specifically for them. This will not only foster the mentoring relationship, but will also potentially increase the mentor's realm of influence to the rest of the group. In fact, inviting other mentors and their mentees to join in the activity will not only further increase the effectiveness of both relationships, but will simultaneously relieve some of the pressure for all involved.

²¹Neil Howe and William Strauss, *Millennials Rising* (New York: Vintage Books, 2000), 8.

There is one last consideration when taking on the mentoring responsibility of a Millennial. “Yers [Millennials] believe that education is the key to their success, and they’re poised to be lifelong learners.”²² While past generations considered learning to be segregated only to the classroom, and that graduations signified the end of the learning process and the beginning of the workplace, Millennials look for educational opportunity in an effort to better their life potential. It is important to differentiate the difference because mentors may believe that their mentees find value only in play, but they would be wise to incorporate education opportunities in their plans. Museum trips, plays, musical concerts and such events are wonderful opportunities to develop the relationship. The local paper is a wonderful resource for festivals, one day classes or local drama presentations.

When considering the responsibility of mentoring, it is important to consider it as building a relationship instead of developing a program. “The solution to the perceptual gap is not more programs, more events or more materials but more time, communication and understanding.”²³ Millennials are not in need of more programs. Their schedules already burst at the seams with after school activities as well as academic projects and family responsibilities. They need a relationship to provide them not only with direction and guidance, but support and unconditional love from someone not ‘required’ to love them because of blood lines. “We must reach beyond the boundaries that separate us and connect with people who are different from us.”²⁴ Educational background or socio-

²²Martin and Tulgan, 10.

²³Barna, 57.

²⁴Dungy, 151.

economic status make no difference when mentoring a youth in need. What matters most is the desire to truly make a difference in the life of another, and to buoy that desire with genuine affection and concern expressed often and deeply.

Everyone's a Mentor

“If you take only one thing from this book, let it be this: Relationships are ultimately what matter—our relationships with God and with other people.”²⁵ This statement cannot be truer. Everyone is a product of relationships, both past and present. Very few have reached adulthood without a single mentor for some space of time in some capacity. Sometimes a mentoring relationship is not even realized until later years when one looks back on their past. For example, one of the greatest mentors in my life was my roommate in academy. At the time I did not realize the extent to which I looked up to him and strived to be like him, but in retrospect I see that a great many of my values, habits and methods of perceiving the world can be traced back to his influence. Another important aspect of this relationship is that he had no idea he was mentoring me. Hence some mentors are purposeful. They step into another's life and offer their support, advice and encouragement. Others, however, are mentors by default. They never choose the role but are thrust into it, sometimes without even their knowledge, let alone their consent.

Teenagers are generally at a point in their lives when they are in dire need of mentors. When a mentor is not forthcoming, teenagers will often look to their peers for the relationship as I did in my academy years. However, it is important to note that

²⁵Dungy, 5.

mentoring can often happen in a heartbeat, and it is, therefore, vital to always remain in the ready even when not in a mentoring relationship per se. “Some mentoring relationships last for years and result in deep friendships. Others can happen in a moment of sharing the wisdom of your experience with someone standing right before you. The key is to look for opportunities and be ready to act.”²⁶ Most people can retrospectively recall a single moment or perhaps a single phrase that stuck with them and continues to provide them with guidance or confidence or insight. No one ever knows when that moment will come or what that phrase may be. It is important to always be in an attitude of mentoring. “Regardless of our situation in life, we are always roles models for someone – always.”²⁷ This explains why it is imperative, especially with valuable souls at risk, that everyone who is serious about their relationship with God also seriously considers their relationships with others and strives to always lead others to Christ.

“The single most important factor that differentiates mentor leaders from other leaders in any setting is their outward focus on others.”²⁸ When an individual has a relationship with another person, no matter how brief that relationship, both of their lives are changed in one way or another. It may be small and considered insignificant, but it is impossible to experience relationships with others and remain unaffected. Everyone’s life is truly, as Denzel Washington noted, “the sum of our influences.”²⁹ Hence it is important to strive for our influence to be positive and supportive through conscientious

²⁶Dungy, 196.

²⁷Ibid., 114.

²⁸Ibid., 20.

²⁹Washington, 270.

effort. "All of us, no matter who—if you're successful, you can look back and think, 'Hey, I didn't get here by myself.'"³⁰ Everyone has benefited from the help and support of others, and should consider how they can be of service in turn.

This is especially true in the spiritual realm. "Every faith tradition in the world has teacher-learner relationships."³¹ Spiritual health and direction should be the main component of true success in life, and thus should be the main resource for mentoring relationships. "Because our spirituality is rooted in the community, it can never become a solo venture."³² While it is true that every man is responsible for working out his own salvation through a living relationship with God (Phil 2:12), it is also true that we are to encourage each other in the faith (1 Thessalonians 5:1). "We simply cannot walk with confidence and hope, in these and other difficult matters, all by ourselves. Our perseverance will falter, and our insights will be too limited."³³

Just as everyone has received the benefits of mentoring to some extent as they grew toward adulthood, so everyone can be a mentor if they value the experience and are willing to invest in the process. Youth need someone that can affect their lives positively. They desire long term relationships in which they feel confident of support and love during difficult times. They need someone who can teach them life-building skills as they explore the potential of their future. They need someone who can share

³⁰Washington, 28.

³¹Marjorie J. Thompson, *Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 102.

³²Ben Campbell Johnson and Andrew Dreitcer, *Beyond the Ordinary: Spirituality for Church Leaders* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2001), 12.

³³Dorothy C. Bass, *Practicing Our Faith* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1997), 196.

with them the long-term repercussions of their immediate decisions, and teach them how to handle the stresses and disappointments of reality. It is the responsibility of the older generations not only to provide those relationships, but to initiate those relationships. We are all family in Christ, and the needs of one are the needs of all. Christ calls us to minister to others as our service to Him, and if necessary we are to seek out those who would benefit from our ministry, not simply wait for those in need to approach us. Jesus states in Matt 25 that we are to invite the stranger into our home, visit those in prison, and care for the sick. All of these acts require initiation on our part, and by taking this initiative and serving those in need, we are serving Christ. Matthew 25:40 states, "And the King will tell them, 'I assure you, when you did it to one of the least of these my brethren and sisters, you were doing it to me!'"

The Necessary Steps for Effective Mentoring

"Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it?" (Luke 14:28). Jesus Himself instructed His followers on the importance of counting the cost before beginning a project. There are few projects in life of more eternal value than that of mentoring, and it is therefore vital to count the cost before engaging in a mentoring relationship. This is not to discourage potential mentors but to allow them to foresee potential deficiencies and to make the appropriate adjustments before actual need arises.

There are eight major considerations when conscientiously deciding to cultivate a mentoring relationship with a young person. The first necessary step is examining one's own life, realizing that being a mentor is in many ways synonymous with being a role model. This leads directly into the second step, re-evaluating one's principles to be sure

they are in line with Scripture. It is only then that a mentor can confidently invest of themselves (step three) and their time (step four), establishing an open door policy (step five) and flooding their mentee with encouragement and praise (step six). Responsible mentoring also includes educating and equipping the mentee (step seven) and, last but not most important, enjoying the time spent together—truly relishing the relationship.

Examine Your Life—Step One

“A good sign that you’re having an effect on a child is when the child starts mimicking you.”³⁴ The tendency of children to mimic what they witness can be observed at nearly any moment in the child’s life. They study lips as others speak, they practice motions as others move, and they experiment with attitudes as others react. As they grow the mimic morphs into a wider range of areas as they choose sports or music or academics in an attempt to gain the approval of those in authority. When they enter the teenage years, that mimic reaches a vital stage. No longer do they mirror minor attributes such as verbal accents, family mannerisms or entertainment choices. Instead they try on the value system of those they respect in an attempt to judge the fit. This explains the necessity of examining one’s own life thoroughly to be sure the example actually presented matches the example one believes they are presenting, and truly reflects the characteristics of Christ. This is illustrated in the following study. “In a more recent survey of 294 adolescents, Sharon Beier and colleagues found that those with natural mentors were significantly less likely to participate in four of five high-risk behaviors they measured: smoking, drug use, carrying a weapon, and unsafe sex. Participation in

³⁴Fry, 49.

the fifth high-risk behavior, alcohol use, was not affected.”³⁵ This final statement does not indicate that alcoholism is the one trait impervious to positive mentoring. Instead what she failed to mention was that these youths were mirroring the very values that their mentors lived. While the mentors talked against smoking, drug use, carrying a weapon, unsafe sex and alcohol use, they only modeled the first four in their lives. Hence while the youth heard their mentors speak against alcohol, they simultaneously watched their mentors drinking it. While adults may feel entitled to drink alcohol and preach abstinence to minors, understanding the benefits of minimum age requirements on specific behaviors, many youth do not make that distinction. In fact, the National Youth Rights Association (NYRA) argues that the “American youth alcohol policy should recognize the inevitability of alcohol consumption among youth and seek to reduce the harm of that alcohol use, rather than unrealistically try to keep young people from drinking at all.”³⁶ The vast majority of youths do not agree that age alone determines the acceptability of behavior, and will copy the actions they witness in adults regardless of the verbal warnings to wait until they reach the legal age. This tendency toward copying actions extends beyond alcohol consumption to every character trait they witness, and hence it is imperative that each of us considers our true witness, not what we perceive our witness to be on the surface, that we not become “a stumbling block” to our youth (see 1 Cor 8:13).

Character is a powerful tool. Words, when not substantiated by actions, are

³⁵Rhodes, 11.

³⁶National Youth Rights Association, “Drinking Age,” January 27, 2011, <http://www.youthrights.org/positionpapers.php> (accessed January 27, 2011).

meaningless. Yet people often listen to the words coming from their own mouths and believe these define the picture they present to society. This is why it is so imperative that people study their own characters and re-evaluate the parallel between their values and their actions. "The tragedy is that many times the exact same weaknesses and problems exist in the lives of those who mentored them."³⁷ Hence if you see a characteristic that needs altering in the life of your mentee, first evaluate your own life. "Kids respond to what they see, he said. If they see a life of holiness and not just theory or preaching, they will grab on to that."³⁸ Mentoring provides great opportunity for molding another's character and comes with great reward, but also holds eternal responsibilities. It is necessary to "First take out the plank in your own eye before removing the speck in your brother's" (Matt 7:5). The dangers in not first evaluating one's own faults can be seen in the example of Eli and Samuel. Eli failed to properly train his own children Hophni and Phineas in the proper respect of the Lord or in the sacredness of their duties at the tabernacle. Samuel emulated Eli's devotion to God, but in later years also failed as a parent which led to the Israelite people's insistence that a king be set up in the stead of Samuel's sons, as described in 1 Sam 8:1-5. Make sure your connection with Christ is right first before choosing the responsibility of leading others to Christ.

Bo Boshers is correct when he states, "We should point out that one of the side benefits of mentoring is that you become more aware of your own progress-or lack of

³⁷Conley, 15.

³⁸Rabey, 128.

it.”³⁹ This does not mean, however, that a person must first reach perfection before engaging in a mentoring relationship. In fact, perfection does not present a realistic picture of life to a mentee. Instead, it is important to be aware of one’s shortcomings and flaws, to find mercy and grace at the cross, and to remain in the covering blood of Christ in all seasons of life. “Mentoring is always about becoming like Jesus, and students learn practical ways to do that by watching how we mimic him.”⁴⁰ Only as mentees watch the struggles of their mentors, witness their total reliance on the Spirit of God, and experience the peace which comes in surrendering completely will they learn the path to true success in life—that of developing a passionate and life-altering relationship with Christ that transcends situations and circumstances.

Re-evaluate Your Principles—Step Two

Building a relationship with youth and providing guidance for them as they explore life only begins to satisfy their mentoring needs. “Effective, life changing mentoring is a product of relationships and principles.”⁴¹ The relationship is a necessary foundation but true mentoring builds on principles which create a foundation upon which youth can build their entire lives. Otherwise the relationship is merely a friendship and never can progress beyond that level. It is, of course, impossible to share what you do not have. Therefore re-evaluating your principles and measuring them against the Scriptures is imperative for truly effective mentoring. Mentees look to their mentors for

³⁹Bosher and Poling, 55.

⁴⁰Ibid., 47.

⁴¹Stoddard, 41.

more than just a good time and an education. School and friendship with peers can provide that just as well. Instead they are desperately looking for an adult with principles worth structuring a life around, principles that will keep them standing straight when the weight of stress and trials pushes them down. They are desperately looking for someone to model these principles and teach them not only which principles can give them stability but also how to incorporate those principles into active daily living. "Vision matters, but character matters more."⁴² During this stage of life teenagers are choosing their value systems and deciding which principles are worth the effort and sacrifice and which are not. Everyone needs the stability of standards and rules, and when no adult presents this stability teenagers look to their peers for that information. This can be quite dangerous as other teens have very little more information or experience on which to base their decisions. They are still investigating their own ideals and principles.

It is important to remember that parents do not always emulate healthy principles for their children, or perhaps have lost their children's respect and therefore their influence. Teenagers desperately need to see standards expressed in adults other than their parents, as many teenagers have troubled home lives and no one to help them through these struggles or show how to properly respond. "Mentors have the advantage of standing outside these family struggles. They can provide a safe haven for teens to air sensitive issues, while still transmitting adult values, advice and perspective."⁴³ Also consider the lessons of mainstream media which bombard teenagers daily. They are taught that good looks matter the most, and that popularity brings a sense of self-worth.

⁴²Dungy, 68.

⁴³Rhodes, 33.

Values and character are downplayed in the media as boring and constraining. Teenagers may believe that their family's values, which may not agree with the media, do not parallel the values of society. Hence the influence of an adult outside of the family and who is thus part of society can make all of the difference in the world. "One familiar TV commercial some years ago made the assertion, 'Image is everything.' But I cannot emphasize strongly enough that in mentoring, image is nothing."⁴⁴ Youth must know that image is fleeting and deceptive. Character and principles define a person, and those traits remain steadfast and stable throughout a person's life. Although more difficult to develop and maintain than an attractive physical appearance, these are the characteristics most valued by God.

The most important principle in the life of a mentor, however, is that of respecting others. Mentees must feel a measure of respect from not only their mentors but from adults in general if they are to cultivate a healthy sense of self-worth. George Bodenheimer addressed this issue with the following testimony concerning his mentor. "He treated me with great respect, and he expected great respect in return. That was always a big thing – treating people how you want to be treated."⁴⁵ It is almost impossible to positively influence those you feel are beneath you, as noted by the famous statement, "People don't care what you know until they know that you care." Those who do not value others will find their own spectrum of influence to be very limited. Hence it is vital to care about others in general and youth specifically in order to influence them positively. This concern and compassion must be authentic if it is to be believable, as

⁴⁴Stoddard, 151.

⁴⁵Washington, 54.

youth have keen vision in terms of potential hypocrisy. As referred to earlier in the case of alcohol abuse, teenagers mimic what they see and pay very little attention to what they hear when the actions do not mirror the words. Teenagers are always watching, and hence it is not possible to only 'put on the cloak of respect' when they are around and expect they will not discover the truth. "If you have integrity, model it."⁴⁶ But if you don't, don't expect your mentee to have integrity. "Mentor leaders should simply be who they are. There's no need to try to be someone else."⁴⁷ Trying to teach a value that you don't consider worthy of your own time and attention is the quickest way for a youth to tune you out and unfortunately will also cause them to question the other values you present. Not only will it potentially degrade the mentoring relationship but this lack of true respect for others may cause even further damage by insinuating itself into the character of the mentee. Hence by our example the youth may be led further away from reflecting Christ's character, and we will bear a measure of responsibility for our influence.

Personal Investment—Step Three

Before anyone even makes the decision to mentor, they must first immerse themselves in impassioned prayer, begging for the Spirit to not only change their hearts so they may be a safe and effective mentor but also to prepare the one for whom they are embarking upon this journey. To make an eternal difference, mentoring must be flooded in prayer. "You will be more successful if you talk to God about men before you talk to

⁴⁶Dungy, 73.

⁴⁷Ibid., 68.

men about God.”⁴⁸ We must be on our knees daily for those we wish to mentor, and for our own selves to be set aside for the sake of the relationship. Not only will this make drastic changes in our mentee but also in us. There is no greater privilege than that of bringing a fellow human being before the throne of God. We should never cease to do this. “Included in the privilege of mentoring young people is the sacred call to pray for them.”⁴⁹ Let all else be put aside as we focus entirely on this awesome responsibility and bring all of our strengths and weaknesses, hopes and preconceptions to the One who has called us to be His ambassadors to a hurting generation.

Developing a relationship with your mentee is the most important aspect of mentoring, for without it there is very little opportunity to influence. Yet this relationship requires time and patience to develop, and the deeper the relationship goes the more potent the influence will become. “It wasn’t his position that gave him influence; it was the relationship he had developed.”⁵⁰ You may attract youth through your personality or gain their respect through your job, but to have true and lasting influence in someone else’s life you must have a relationship with them. This relationship is not reliant on your level of education, your job description, your income, your race, your socio-economic status, or even your religious convictions. The relationship is reliant only on the personal investment you are willing to relegate to your mentee. “Personal relationships are the fertile soil from which all advancement, all success, all achievement in real life grows.”⁵¹

⁴⁸Conley, 11.

⁴⁹Hendricks, 61.

⁵⁰Dungy, 110.

⁵¹Ibid., 86.

Relationships vary, however, just as people vary. Some relationships simply click and thrive with little investment. Other relationships grow slowly but steadily and require consistent investment in order to maintain a healthy level of growth. However there are ways in which mentors can purposefully increase the growth of trust and rapport in the relationship, and that is by maintaining an open and honest demeanor. Be approachable and authentic, accepting and encouraging. Do not, however, pressure the mentee or force the relationship in a direction or a pace that will be anti-productive. Remember that the relationship is just as dependent on the mentee's receptiveness as your own attitude. A relationship is bidirectional and any one person cannot expect to dictate the terms by which they interact with someone else. "Any overtures adults themselves make toward youth are likely to be perceived and responded to quite differently depending in the young person's state of receptiveness."⁵² So if the relationship is not growing at the pace you would like despite your best efforts to the contrary, do not give up. The foundation of the relationship is vitally important so give it the time it needs to develop strong and deep roots. Microwaveable relationships usually last as long as it takes to prepare microwaveable food. The most satisfying relationships take time and patience to develop.

In developing a relationship with a mentee, it may be helpful to follow Carolyn Martin's advice and "Leverage uniqueness."⁵³ Discover the unique traits of your mentee and investigate them. Find out what excites them and what aggravates them, what propels them and what stalls them. Everyone is unique and their interests to a degree can

⁵²Rhodes, 31.

⁵³Martin and Tulgan, 67.

define their image of themselves. This may help in discovering or developing commonalities and hence provide opportunities for bonding. Do not be discouraged if your mentee's interests do not mirror your own. There is no reason to avoid activities with which we are unfamiliar. In fact, inviting a teenager to teach you can prove to be key in gaining their trust and respect. Teaching a teenager to master a new skill can give them the chance to rely on you for proper instruction and also to test your patience and acceptance of them when they meet challenges perhaps unsuccessfully at first. Let your own uniqueness and that of your mentee be your guide as you consider ways in which to experience each other's strengths and struggles.

Do not let the expectations of others influence your decisions for mentoring activities. Only the opinions of the two people in the relationship should be taken into consideration. Yet it is imperative that the opinions of both people in the relationship actually are considered, for not everyone enjoys the same activities. This fact was demonstrated in a survey by the Big sister/Big Brother mentoring program. They point out that while "big Sister might sit down and talk—that's the last thing guys want to do."⁵⁴ This may or may not be true for you and your mentee, and may in fact change with the moment. Many guys feel that a comical exchange over pizza and sodas make a Saturday night exciting, while many girls may rather experience the latest romantic theatrical presentation. Discover the intricacies of your own mentee, and of your own interests. Delve into those and use them to build a solid relationship of mutual consideration and enjoyment.

⁵⁴Rhodes, 92.

Devoting Time—Step Four

One look at my refrigerator and it quickly becomes clear that, like most Americans, I am obese. Yet this does not describe the insides of my refrigerator nor the size of my waist. It describes the state of my event calendar. My schedule is tightly packed with valuable appointments to the extent that it is difficult to pencil even one more responsibility into the all-too-tiny square. I would venture a guess that many people's calendars mirror mine. Perhaps you are considering the responsibilities and time constraints of mentoring and wonder how you will fit it into an already bulging schedule. "We fidget during the few seconds it takes for our computers to come on, and we grit our teeth when we place a call to question a billing statement and hear the dreaded words, 'Can you hold, please?'"⁵⁵ Time is one of our society's most precious commodities. Where will you get the time needed for effective mentoring? The realistic answer is that I do not know. However, I do know that we make time for what is important to us. If God is calling you into a mentoring relationship, then you will prioritize life accordingly.

Mentoring requires a full commitment to find success. Notice that the amount of time necessary for success has not been revealed. That is because no magic formula exists. The time necessary to maintain a healthy mentoring relationship is dependent on your availability and the needs of your mentee, and is not likely to remain stable. Another factor that will determine time commitment is the degree to which the mentee can be incorporated you're your already existing schedule. For example you can invite

⁵⁵Stoddard, 43.

your mentee to the church picnic or another such event to which you are already committed.

But in the same vein, it is important that some time is set aside strictly for your mentee so that he or she feels valued. One of the greatest gifts we can bestow on others, particularly in this day and age, is the gift of our time. There is no substitution for our time and attention. If you don't make time with your mentee a priority then he or she will very quickly feel that they are just an add-on to your life and not something that you value. However, the reverse is necessary as well. "We also need to set realistic boundaries with the students so they don't expect attention or time from us that we cannot or should not give."⁵⁶ Be upfront with your mentee when beginning your relationship. Define your expectations and your constraints and allow him or her to do the same. This will avoid unnecessary hurt feelings and will help mentees understand that prioritizing life is a necessity, and that even relationships must be monitored so as to not place undue strain on a person's life balance.

There are responsibilities that should precede your mentoring relationship, as well as things that should give way for it. You must prioritize the facets of your own life. However, when you decide those priorities you must commit to them. "You know as well as I do that, whether it's a crisis or not, there always seems to be a reason why this time just isn't the right time."⁵⁷ The best way is to start small. Schedule only the most pressing engagements, then more events around those engagements as it is most

⁵⁶Boshers and Poling, 83.

⁵⁷Dungy, 58.

convenient. Remember this truth, however. It is always better to add time with your mentee than to take it away.

Every opportunity matters-regardless of size so make the most of them. If your schedule only allows a five minute phone call with your mentee, then do not hesitate to pick up the phone. Simply start the conversation with, "I only have a couple of minutes, but I wanted to check on how things are going for you." If it becomes clear that more time is required then schedule a time to call back and keep to that schedule. People feel valued when they are considered during the few spare moments of the day when so many other concerns vie for attention. Sometimes it is in these stolen moments that your valuation of the true worth of the relationship becomes clear to the mentee and he or she responds in kind, deepening the relationship in a way which perhaps could not have been accomplished in the lengthier yet more convenient hours.

Another aspect of the time commitment to consider is the length of time the mentoring relationship will last. This again depends on you and your mentee, and to a large extent it simply depends on life. "You meet as long as the mentoring partner keeps coming back."⁵⁸ Personally I have mentored youth for as short a time span as a school year and as long as many years and still counting. "While some mentoring relationships are fleeting, others might go on for years. The duration doesn't seem to matter."⁵⁹ What matters is that you are willing to be a listening ear, a source of sound advice and foundation of stability in an ever-changing world. It is also important to note that while the mentoring relationship may one day end, the influence you have exerted over the

⁵⁸Stoddard, 56.

⁵⁹Fry, 6.

youth will never leave them. For example, I mentored one special youth for only the length of a school when he graduated and moved to college. Years later I received a call from him because he found himself in need of direction and a new perspective. There is no definitive ending point to a healthy mentoring relationship, even when circumstances demand a change in the dynamics.

“A good mentor knows that the investment in a student won’t necessarily pay off in the short term, . . . plant a shade tree under which someone else will sit.”⁶⁰ The time you invest in mentoring will never be wasted, although you may be tempted to think so because you do not see any change happening. Remember that it takes years for a river to change its course, and it may very well be the case that you do not see the full effects of the difference you have made in your mentee’s life. Simply be satisfied that you have indeed made a difference that will last a lifetime. Tony Dungy remembers his mentor in the following statement. “He didn’t have any special ‘mentor training’ or a clear plan or agenda, but what he had was some time and the willingness to invest it in someone like me.”⁶¹ Do not worry with the future or struggle to make a huge impact. Simply give up a portion of your time and choose instead to invest that time in someone else. This small sacrifice may very well bring great rewards to someone in need.

Establishing an Open Door Policy—Step Five

The first step to establishing an open door policy is to enter your mentee’s open door and become part his or her life. If you truly want to mentor and have a relationship

⁶⁰Boshers and Poling, 24.

⁶¹Dungy, 103.

with your mentee, you must be willing to enter their world or they will be skeptical of your interest. This may entail reading materials you would not normally choose or learning activities generally not in your scope of interest. “In order to lead effectively, mentor leaders must be willing to get into the trenches. They must get involved. It’s not possible to mentor from an ivory tower.”⁶² To share a relationship, you must share worlds. You must understand the topics of their conversations, know the friends they hang with, and recognize the issues that are important to them. Ellen White describes Jesus’ method of ministry by stating that He “mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, ‘Follow Me.’” You must utilize this same method of ministry if you are to be effective, inviting youth to follow you to the Savior. You must go to them and involve yourself in their world, for they are not likely to approach you. “The key, I believe, is the mentor’s willingness to ‘come down from the mountain’—to leave the lofty perch of success and authority—and simply to walk alongside the mentoring partner.”⁶³

Pay attention to your mentee. Study his or her life to see the areas in which he or she needs extra guidance and nurturing. Discover their goals and look for ways to help them achieve those goals. “A mentor looks for how God is working in the student and tries to support that work.”⁶⁴ When mentors set goals without first considering the needs of their mentee, they may be forcing a personality into a niche that does not fit. This is

⁶²Dungy, 77.

⁶³Stoddard, 63.

⁶⁴Boshers and Poling, 105.

never a good idea and will only lead to confusion, rebellion and frustration. Instead study them objectively for a while until it becomes clear to you the direction in which God is leading them. A mentor's purpose is not to clone themselves, stamping their personality and ideals into the minds of the next generation. Instead a mentor's purpose is to help the youth hear the voice of God and learn to obey.

Consider again the story of Eli and Samuel found in 1 Sam 3. As Samuel slept that night near the Ark of God, he heard a voice calling him. Believing it to be Eli, who was by this time very old and nearly blind, Samuel hurried to his mentor's side. Eli may have been annoyed at being woken by the young man, although the Bible does not say, yet he answered in patience regardless of the late hour and interrupted sleep. He spoke gently to Samuel, even calling him "my son," and instructed him to lie back down for the night. This occurred two more times before Eli realized the gravity of the situation—that God Himself was calling the boy. When Eli finally recognized this, he instructed Samuel in the way to enter into conversation with the Lord. Eli did not press Samuel into the Lord's ministry, but once he understood the Lord's calling he helped the boy along the path the Lord had laid out for him. This is the purpose of a mentor—not to set out the path, but to help the mentee along the path already set out by the Lord and to help them grow into all the Lord has intended them to become.

"We should step into our students' shoes. . . . But when we are being truly transformative teachers, we enable students to step into our shoes."⁶⁵ Mentoring differs from a mere friendship. Being involved in another person's life is enjoyable and interesting. It lends color and vitality to life. However, allowing others into our own

⁶⁵Eric Liu, *Guiding Lights* (New York: Random House, 2004), 211.

lives is not always the most comfortable situation. When others are invited into our lives in an intimate relationship, we allow them to witness our quirks, our weaknesses, and our failures. Entering the lives of others gives us a sense of power. Inviting others into our lives reveals our vulnerability. Consider, for example, the ordinance of humility celebrated in many churches, also known as foot washing. When a visitor sits alone looking lost and confused, many church members rush to offer their services. Every member is conscientious that every person present receives the benefit of the service. Yet how many church members are just as conscientious that they receive the service? In fact, how many members choose to dip the water into the bowls or organize the stacks of towels in an effort to avoid having their feet washed? In the days of Jesus, only servants washed the dust from the smelly, sweaty feet exposed to the dirty roads by open sandals. It was a humiliating but necessary task for which no one volunteered. Today it seems the humiliation is in allowing someone else to witness the ugliness of our feet or to see us pick the lint of our socks from our toes. The humiliation is in exposing a part of our bodies which generally remain hidden from the public's view. But only by exposing our true selves, even parts of which we may not be very proud, can we truly form the intimate relationship necessary for effective mentoring. "To get into the mentoring partner's world, we have to let them into our world."⁶⁶ A mentor must have an open door policy in many respects, not the least of which is inviting the mentee into the reality of our lives. "This is what young people want in a mentor – someone who is real, who can relate with the joys, struggles, and everyday issues they encounter."⁶⁷

⁶⁶Stoddard, 63.

⁶⁷Ibid., 67.

Yet the most often understood meaning of the phrase open door policy is that one is available at any time should a need arise. School buildings are fraught with many doors leading to the offices of coaches, teachers, administrators, janitors, and even cafeteria supervisors. It seems every adult on school property has a space to call his or her own. How often are students seen crossing those thresholds and entering the personal space of those in authority? The doors are rarely locked, yet students seem to view the doors as walls instead of a means to access the area on the other side. It is not sufficient to allow a door to remain closed yet unlocked and still consider that it substantiates an open door policy. Not only must the door be open, but the individual must be open as well. They must be, as Eli, willing to be interrupted. "The lesson that is continually reinforced in me is that to take advantage of unexpected opportunities, we must leave ourselves available."⁶⁸ No one ever knows when a momentous opportunity to mentor may present itself, just as Eli did not expect to guide young Samuel into an interactive communion with God in the darkness of an otherwise ordinary night. Yet these opportunities can afford great change in the life of the mentor, and can facilitate great progress for the ministry of God.

"In this discussion of openness, it might be helpful to mention that there is a difference between transparency and vulnerability."⁶⁹ While openness and honesty are necessary qualities in building a healthy mentoring relationship and give the mentee a sense of what to truly expect during adulthood, this is not a license to unload every private detail onto an unsuspecting youth. There are certain emotions, certain

⁶⁸Stoddard, 202.

⁶⁹Ibid., 69.

experiences, and even certain views that should be kept private. Youth are not fully equipped yet to deal with the realities of adulthood, and they should not be thrust into that environment prematurely. It is a fine line to walk, but a necessary differentiation to understand. “Mentors are more than friends and confidants. We are also role models.”⁷⁰ This is a heavy responsibility, and calls for greater wisdom and deeper self-control than required by a typical friendship. While the reward potential in a mentoring relationship is great, the potential pitfalls can at times seem overwhelming. It is necessary to always keep this differentiation between friendship and mentorship in the forefront of every mentoring decision for the sake of the mentee, as well as for your own safety.

Encouragement and Praise—Step Six

Tony Dungy asserts, “Everyone needs encouragement even when things are going well.”⁷¹ Encouragement can mean a variety of things at different times during someone’s life. It may be just a little bit of sunshine added to the day or it could be that extra bit of adrenaline that allows someone to make it through a difficult situation. Hebrews 3:13 exhorts us to “encourage one another daily.” Encouraging someone can be as simple as sending a card, leaving a message on their voice mail or even simply greeting them with more than the usual smile. Praise is encouragement taken one step further. It consists of not just letting the person know you are thinking of them or that you’re glad to see them, but that you have been watching them and you have noticed their positive actions. For example, an encouraging note might read, “I was thinking about you today, and I hope

⁷⁰Fry, 95.

⁷¹Dungy, 179.

everything is going well for you.” A note of praise might read, “I noticed how well you treated the children in Sabbath School last weekend. I believe they saw a bit of Jesus in you that day, and I appreciate what you do for them!”

Encouragement and praise both leave a warm feeling of acceptance and appreciation in their wake. Aside from times of hardship and tragedy, there is no single period in life when encouragement and praise are more needed than childhood and adolescence when a young person is still unsure of his or her position in society. This is also the time when encouragement and praise can hold the most weight and can continue to uplift the person even decades later. However, it is important not to forget that essential truth of the youth’s ability to see through hypocrisy. Hence, praise must be accurate if it is to be beneficial.

“It’s important that the praise be realistic.”⁷² If the praise does not hit the mark, then the very comment meant to uplift the person may be considering patronizing and have the opposite effect. For example, if a young person present special music for the church service but the song does not go very well, it is imperative that the young person be encouraged but not deceived. Insisting that the song was excellent when the young person knows otherwise will cause them to doubt the sincerity of your compliment, and hence to doubt other compliments you may give in the future. The temptation may be to tell the person, “That was the most beautiful rendition of that song I have ever heard! You have such a beautiful voice!” This will bring attention to their performance and very likely make them ill at ease, as they are most assuredly aware of their deficit. Instead it is perhaps better to praise a related action that truly deserves admiration, such as “You are

⁷²Fry, 99.

so at ease up there on stage! I couldn't even tell if you were nervous or not. You seemed right at home!" There is always some aspect of a person's actions (when done with good purpose) that deserves praise and appreciation. When the compliment focuses on such an aspect, the person is left without a doubt as to the sincerity of the compliment and can feel good about themselves without second-guessing the true meaning behind the comment.

Encouragement and praise is not only for when things are going great and people around you are accomplishing much and enjoying success in life. It is important to bolster others during their victories, but it is perhaps more needed when life is not going very well. This is true for people of all ages, and as Christians it is our duty and privilege to lift everyone up in prayer and to encourage them as opportunity allows. Paul wrote in 1 Tim 2:1, "I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone." However, the danger comes in assuming that troubles affect all age groups in the same manner and to the same extent. It is important to remember that the degree of stress cannot be found in the situation but in the reaction elicited by the situation. A teenager's romantic break-up may seem like a puppy love gone wrong from an adult's perspective, but to the teenager it may feel as if life will never be worth living again. So while it is vital to support every age group through difficult times, it is also vital to recognize difficult times according to the definition of the sufferer.

"What they may need the most is just to know that we care and that we are there for them."⁷³ It is not necessary to have all of the answers, but simply to show you care in a very real and tangible way. Whenever the right words fail, simply say, "I am so terribly

⁷³Stoddard, 108.

sorry,” and then say no more except to be responsive. “Do more listening than talking.”⁷⁴ The Greek philosopher Epictetus wisely noted, “We have two ears and one mouth so that we can listen twice as much as we speak.” Even if the right words are offered, there is often a danger that those words will be spoken in haste before the sufferer is ready to listen. Time must be given for grief and anger before one can be receptive to resolution. Timing is key, and timing differs to every person and every situation. When there is doubt concerning the timing, then rely on a simple expression of sympathy and offer your presence as the gift words cannot provide. “If you can’t relate to your mentoring partner’s struggle, just hang out.”⁷⁵ A simple investment of your time reassures others that they are valued during a time when they might be questioning that very fact. Your company could offer them an opportunity to immerse themselves fully in their grief, allowing for the healing to progress, or your company could offer them a hiatus from their harsh reality and refresh them for the struggle at hand. When in doubt of your course of action, remember the words of King Solomon in Prov 17:8, “Even a fool is counted wise when he holds his peace; when he shuts his lips, he is considered perceptive.”

It may seem strange to incorporate encouragement and praise as an effective asset in a mentoring relationship, but it must be remembered that these actions have the capacity to dramatically alter a person’s life. “Correction does much, but encouragement does more.”⁷⁶ At times a person’s difficulties stem from the natural results of their own

⁷⁴Fry, 93.

⁷⁵Stoddard, 74.

⁷⁶Dungy, 177.

actions. When this is the case, the person is more often than not acutely aware of their mistake, heaping guilt upon sorrow during an already difficult time. It then stands to reason that during difficult times, people are much more in need of reassurance than normal even if they are less deserving. It is more imperative than ever to find the positive in people and to inform them of their assets and benefits to society at large, to the church in general, and to you specifically. Perhaps with youth it seems there is little to encourage or praise. Youth can push adults to their limits, and often do simply to test boundaries and the adult's staying power and sincerity. David Stoddard remembers his own attitude as a mentor by describing himself as "determined to accept him where he was, not where I felt he was supposed to be. I didn't flinch when he told me about his wild behavior, even when I personally disapproved."⁷⁷ This is paramount, especially in the beginning. Everyone needs to be loved unconditionally, and youth are no exception.

In fact, to an extent they are more in need of unconditional love at that point in their lives than during any period later in life. To be effective, you must not be flustered. Accept them as Christ has accepted you—wholeheartedly and without judgment. Search for the best in your mentee and praise them often for their victories and accomplishments. Most of all, praise them simply for being themselves, then watch the amazing transformation as your struggling relationship blossoms into the interactive, mutually beneficial miracle of mentoring.

Educating and Equipping—Step Seven

Just as a mentoring relationship differs from a friendship, so time spent together

⁷⁷Stoddard, 111.

will at times differ than simply spending time together. Mentoring comes with great responsibility, and while having fun together is most definitely vital to deepening the rapport, it is also necessary to provide life lessons designed to benefit youth. Hence it is necessary to integrate education into the relationship. This does not necessary mean inviting the mentee over in the evenings for a study hall, but if the mentee is struggling in classes this option should certainly be investigated. Far from oppressing the mentee, your help will allow them greater understanding of the subject matter which will require less investment time to accomplish the same amount of homework. Thus, although the two of you seem to be working on perhaps dull material, it truly is a benefit which allows for not only greater academic success but also more free time for fun and games.

Young people also need the opportunity to learn lessons not available in the schools, such as changing a flat tire, balancing a checkbook, planning family meals, or juggling household chores. As youth learn these life skills, their self-confidence will increase and they will be better fitted for their adult role in society. As these activities are traditionally shared within the boundaries of the family, it is no surprise that a familial bond often forms during these activities and opens the floodgates for mentoring opportunities. "Children probably benefit more from the conversations you share than the activities, but the activities get you to the place where you can communicate."⁷⁸ Also consider the possibility that your mentee may possess skills and knowledge that may benefit you. Perhaps he or she is a talented painter or a computer geek or budding gourmet chef. Giving your mentee the opportunity to teach you will reinforce the concept that they are valuable and can bring something to the table themselves.

⁷⁸Fry, 112.

For areas which interest you both but in which neither of you are experienced, consider outside resources. Opportunities abound for learning in your community, which is most beneficial for areas in which you may not be familiar. Community classes in general auto mechanics, photography or physical fitness can provide mutually beneficial opportunities for you both as individuals and as a team. "As a mentor, you can help a teen take positive risks."⁷⁹ Youth thrive on new experiences. They enjoy pushing the limits. It is during this stage in life when they are discovering their interests and strengths, and must try new activities so they can find their niche. By leading them to opportunities for positive risks you are fulfilling that desire in a healthy and constructive manner, decreasing their likelihood of pursuing dangerous activities. You are also teaching them that failure is simply an opportunity to try again, and not an end in and of itself. Your foundation of acceptance and support buoy them, giving them the courage necessary to truly step out of their comfort zones. What better way to encourage this in your mentee than to step out of your own comfort zone and experience failures on the road to success? "There's no way to learn to drive other than actually getting in the car and driving."⁸⁰

During this learning process always remember to "interact on what they discover."⁸¹ In other words, communicate effectively with your mentee to be sure they are benefitting fully from the experience. If they are not understanding a concept or failing to master a skill, then capitalize on the opportunity to focus more intently on that issue. This will not only increase their knowledge base, but will teach them how to

⁷⁹Fry, 101.

⁸⁰Boshers and Poling, 107.

⁸¹Stoddard, 133.

persevere until a task is met satisfactorily. "As Coach Noll pointed out to me, every player loves to work on his strengths, but only the great ones work on their weaknesses."⁸² It will also reassure them that you are taking note of them personally, and that you care if they fail or succeed. It is also important to note the role of equipping youth while educating them. "Equipping goes hand in hand with educating if we want people to perform to their highest potential."⁸³ Providing someone with the knowledge of how to perform a task is educating them. However, allowing them to experience the actual task and providing them with the tools to successfully manage it is considered equipping. Too often youth are educated but not equipped. They are 'lectured' but not truly taught. By interacting with them and ensuring they experience the lessons instead of simply learning them, they will not only develop the skills at hand but also the ability to develop skills independently in life as the need arises.

Before moving beyond this point, there is one aspect of educating and equipping youth in the effective Christian life that must be addressed. This is the essential art of altruistic service. In the story of the Good Samaritan, "the first question that the priest asked and the first question that the Levite asked was: 'If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me?' But . . . the good Samaritan . . . reversed the question: 'If I do not stop to help this man, what will happen to him?'"⁸⁴ Paul himself exhorts us in Gal 5:13 to "serve one another in love." Even Jesus calls us to search for opportunities to serve instead of insisting others serve us. In Matt 20:26 he states, "Whoever wants to become

⁸²Dungy, 46.

⁸³Ibid., 174.

⁸⁴Ibid., 193.

great among you must be your servant . . . just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve.”

Serving others is not optional as a child of God. It is instead of characteristic of our relationship with Him. It denotes an understanding of His mission and our calling. “True spiritual leaders know that they are not somehow stripped of their authority or robbed of their ability to lead when they stoop to wash feet.”⁸⁵ Instead they reach the true heights of their calling when they reach down into the depths in order to help their fellow man. It is important to note that we as Christians are called not only to minister to those within the confines of the church, but also those outside of the church from whom we expect no gratitude or benefit. “The true meaning of life is to plant trees, under whose shade you do not expect to sit.”⁸⁶ Hence it is imperative not only that we fulfill this obligation with a willing and cheerful heart, but to imprint this same spirit on the impressionable characters of our mentees.

Servanthood is not something that can be taught. It must be caught. A ministry of action speaks much louder than a ministry of words. An attitude of service must be true to the core of your being if it is to be effectively conveyed. “Adults give a higher priority to helping kids do good deeds that are doing good deeds themselves.”⁸⁷ Only by example can anyone truly lead, for if one’s actions do not mirror their words then their words lose their impact. The benefits of displaying such an attitude of service continue long after the mentoring relationship ends. A prime example of this can be found in the

⁸⁵Conley, 50.

⁸⁶Dungy, 194.

⁸⁷Howe and Strauss, 215.

very ministry of mentoring. Those that have been mentored often turn around and mentor others themselves, continuing the blessing of service and changing lives for eternity. In altruistic service, your influence continues much longer than the effects of the simple actions and your inspiration delves much deeper than the momentary emotion. Service is the very core of the Christian heart. No greater lesson can result from a mentoring relationship than to teach another to walk in the very footsteps of God.

Enjoying—Step Eight

This last step to effective mentoring may seem like common sense, but often it is overlooked due to the deep desire to do everything well. To compound the issue, many adults have forgotten how to play simply for the sheer enjoyment of doing so. It is necessary, then, to relearn how to play—to relearn how to enjoy another's company not for of a sense of accomplishment but simply for the joy of being together. There is purpose in play, and benefit in accomplishing seemingly little. "When people have fun together, tensions ease and generation gaps get bridged."⁸⁸ Stress eases and barriers fall when people simply enjoy each other's company with no agenda or burden of deadlines. Perhaps a potent example of this need for a relationship beyond the extemporary can be found in a type of daily devotional. Imagine sitting beside a clock with a Bible in your hands, struggling to focus on the meaning of the Psalmist's words as you fitfully endure the twenty minutes you have allotted to the Lord. When the twenty minutes concludes, far from being rested in the Spirit and fitted for another day of struggles, instead you feel rushed, relieved, and already worrying how you will meet the needs of the day. The

⁸⁸Lancaster and Stillman, 148.

twenty minutes forfeits its potential benefits of drawing you closer to God in the Spirit and instead becomes a responsibility to fulfill in order to check it off of the day's to-do list.

“Do we ever stop to think what it means to enjoy God?”⁸⁹ This illustration greatly parallels the time spent with a mentee. Most certainly there is a time for deep study of the Scriptures, for comparing verses and struggling with meanings. However, there is also a time to simply “Be still, and know that I am God” (Ps 46:10). There is a time for educational discussions, for active interaction and for serious conversation. However, there also is a time to be still, and know your mentee. Let current duties and future plans come to halt every so often, and simply enjoy the moment. “Enjoy the journey- especially today, because the future you envision may never come.”⁹⁰ Blogger Erika Harris perhaps embodies this concept best in the following quote. “I’m less interested in *why* we’re here. I’m wholly devoted to *while* we’re here.” There is a time for the “why,” but there most certainly is also a time for the “while.” Take that time seriously, and find serious enjoyment in the company of others—most specifically, in the company of your mentee.

The Time for Action

The generational characteristics have now been explained. The eight steps of effective mentoring have now been presented. Information has been provided and it is now time for action. But with all of the information spinning in your head, perhaps you

⁸⁹Thompson, 45.

⁹⁰Dungy, 32.

are not sure exactly where to begin. “Do you really want to know how to get started? . . . Just do it.”⁹¹ While I have presented eight steps to guide you toward effective mentoring, knowledge of these steps alone will not build the relationship. You must act. You must make the decision to mentor and then follow through. Remember that the best mentoring relationship is the one instigated by God. Allow Him the opportunity to join you with a youth needing your specific scope of interests and expertise. Do your homework and acquaint yourself with youth. Stay attuned to the Spirit’s leading and earnestly pray for His guidance. When you feel drawn toward a young person, do not let fear or discomfort hold you back. Remember you are the adult and it is your responsibility to make the first move. “There is no magic formula for mentoring, no timing will ever be perfect, and no matter how uncomfortable you feel about getting started, it will never feel right until you go for it.”⁹² More than anything, remember to be genuine. Show a genuine interest in them. Truly listen, and actively converse. Make mental notes of their family, their friends, their hobbies, their classes—any information they share must be information that they feel is important. In fact, jot down the information for future reference. Remember that whatever is important to them must be important to you, because they are important to you.

“Mentor leadership requires a deliberate decision to get involved in someone else’s life.”⁹³ Decide how much time you are able to invest in your mentoring relationship and then add that time into your calendar. Invite them to gather with some

⁹¹Stoddard, 195.

⁹²Ibid., 196.

⁹³Dungy, 118.

friends at your home or to join you for a lunch date in town. Make it widely known that you are willing to chauffeur them into town when your schedule permits. Make yourself accessible and inviting, that they will not hesitate to approach you with their requests.

“Second, I put the ball in his court. I let the partner know that I am totally available, that I would be glad to mentor him – if he wants me to.”⁹⁴ It may be wise to begin with shorter, less frequent sessions and then allow that time to grow as the relationship grows. Not only will adding time together encourage your mentee, but cancelling plans will lead them to wonder if they truly are important to you. Also remember that it is not always necessary to plan an activity with them, but even sending them a care package or calling to see how their week is progressing will greatly enhance the relationship. As a general rule, having some form of contact at least once a week will keep the communication lines open, even if this is simply a “facebook” post. Everyone longs to be loved, and expressing love (appropriately, of course) will draw the youth into your realm of influence. While the amount of time you spend together will vary with the seasons and depends greatly on personal needs at the time, remember that it is always necessary to remain available to your mentee in some way, shape or form. They must know they can count on you in difficult times for the mentoring portion of the relationship to flourish. Make them a priority. “If you have a passion for something, you will make time for it.”⁹⁵ However, your passion for a specific youth will not necessarily translate into that youth’s passion for mentoring.

Everyone is at a different stage in life, and just as some adults are not geared for

⁹⁴Stoddard, 54.

⁹⁵Ibid., 55.

mentoring, so some youth may not be ready for that type of relationship either. Do not press your agenda. A relationship must be consensual if it is to be at all. If you face this situation, then back up and re-evaluate. Pray again for the Lord's guidance and for His Spirit to also work on the heart of your future mentee. Then listen again for the Lord's voice. God will lead you to the right person at the right time. God's timing is perfect, and "His wisdom is profound" (Job 9:4).

Conclusion

"In short, mentoring is where the Christian life is caught, not taught."⁹⁶ Let Christ into your heart and He will use you to reach out to the next generation. Today's youth desperately need you, and you need them as well, but the mentoring relationship is doomed to fail in the area it is most needed if Christ is not first in your life. Your devotion to Him will make all the difference in the world. Not only will He make effectual the efforts dedicated to your mentee, but He will give you wisdom and strength when the relationship confronts challenges. "And in that moment, it's Joshua also realizing that he can only do it with the leadership and in the strength of God."⁹⁷ Perhaps it may also be wise to find your own mentor to guide you through this new experience. Never be afraid to ask for help, as this is not a sign of weakness but of wisdom. Others appreciate being asked for help. It is a compliment to their character and a vote of your confidence in them. Explain your desire to be a mentor and ask if they have ever before experienced anything similar. This will give you the opportunity to judge their interest

⁹⁶Boshers and Poling, 22.

⁹⁷Dungy, 15.

and their likelihood to accept your proposal. You may feel awkward broaching the subject, but consider how you would feel if the situation were reversed. You would feel honored, and so will they.

“There’s no cookie-cutter mold for the ‘ideal’ mentor.”⁹⁸ The best mentors are the authentic mentors. You cannot offer what you do not possess, and you cannot mentor an attitude you have not cultivated. Remember that God is the “author and finisher of our faith” (Heb 12:2) and He will guide you in your relationship with Him, and hence your relationship with your mentee. Do not allow yourself to be discouraged if your mentee does not exhibit the characteristics you had hoped to establish in them. In John 4:37, Jesus Himself refers to what must have been a common proverb in His time, and one which still remains today. “Thus the saying, ‘One sows and another reaps’ is true.” The change you longed to see in your mentee may fully develop long after your relationship has ended, or may never come to fruition at all. Our concern is not the final result, but the journey. “Most of the time, we are only judged on the outcome, whereas the only thing we can control is the process.”⁹⁹ Every mentee will be different. Some will grow in leaps and bounds before your very eyes, while in others you may fail to ever witness real progress. “Changes in youth vary tremendously.”¹⁰⁰ Your job is to simply invite God to use you and leave the rest up to His providence. “Train up a child in the way he should go . . . and watch what happens.”¹⁰¹

⁹⁸Fry, 46.

⁹⁹Dungy, 89.

¹⁰⁰Rhodes, 50.

¹⁰¹Washington, 272.

CHAPTER 5

REVIEW OF THE SURVEY

Maplewood Academy is a boarding high school operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. As with other boarding academies, students living at Maplewood spend at best approximately five days a month with their parents during the school year. Hence they are separated from parental influences to a great degree for the vast majority of their high school career. Many academies have attempted to negate this loss to some extent through the instigation of the Faculty Family program, realizing that parental or mentoring influences are an important factor in healthy development during this adolescent stage. Maplewood initiated its Faculty Family program in the fall of 1985, and has continued this tradition annually since that time. The program consists of dividing the student body into small groups comprised of approximately six to nine students per group depending on the enrollment and the number of sponsors available. Sponsors are either faculty members or church members in good standing, and all are voluntary. These sponsors are to fulfill the role of Spiritual Surrogate parents for their Faculty Family students at least during the school term and hopefully beyond the end of the program. The Families meet regularly, and often the meeting is at the sponsor's home. This encourages intimacy and familiarity, and provides casual opportunities for mentoring on all levels. The program strives to match sponsors and students with the fundamental goal of developing a mentoring relationship to further the students' progress

educationally, socially, emotionally, and spiritually.

The Selection of Students

Since the inception of Faculty Families at Maplewood Academy, the selection of the students for Families has evolved a number of times. Originally one faculty member would assign the students to the different family groups. This allowed for the faculty member to control the division in a manner they felt would be most beneficial to everyone involved. For example, certain student cliques who caused trouble when together could be split among the various Faculty Families to discourage poor behavior. However, this did not allow for the sponsors themselves to choose their own students to mentor, and it did not allow for the students to choose others with whom they would be grouped. This caused some problems when certain students were grouped with others for whom they harbored a severe dislike, or when certain faculty members did not click well with their students and were not able to effectively mentor them. With these concerns in mind, the selection process changed to a sign up list. The sponsors were listed and student could then sign up for their specific Family. However, this presented the problem of favoritism. Certain sponsor's Families would fill very quickly, leaving later students very few options. Not only did this create more of a 'first come wins' dilemma, but it also tended to group like students together. For example, the more outgoing students would generally be the first to sign up. The less outgoing students would then by default be grouped together in the last available Families. Thus the students that talked very little and were more tended toward melancholy were all grouped together, making conversation and mingling very difficult. On the other hand, some groups would be difficult to control due to the high energy level and overbalance of extroverted

personalities. In other words, some groups would be bouncing off the walls with the sanguine students and others would be sitting around staring at the walls with melancholy students. This not only made effective mentoring very difficult, but even simple group dynamics were very hard to control.

After this experiment, the selection process was changed so that the students were allowed to sign up in groups but not choose the faculty member. Once groups were chosen, the faculty would pick a number out of hat and then take turns choosing their group. This allowed the faculty members some control over their Families, while the students held some control over their group. However, this system still had like personalities signing up together as the previous system had faced. Moreover, this system also allowed dating couples to sign up together which not only caused them to focus solely on each other but also created more of a chaperoning burden for the faculty members. To make matters worse, once dating couples broke up, they still found themselves stuck in the same Faculty Families as their ex. At one point Maplewood even experienced one male breaking the dating relationship with a female student in his Faculty Family only to shortly thereafter begin dating another female in that same Faculty Family. Obviously that sponsor was able to accomplish very little mentoring that year.

After following this system for a number of years, the faculty decided to choose the students themselves via a type of draft. Each sponsor would draw a number out of a hat to determine their picking rank. The selection would begin with the first and progress until the last, but would then begin with the last and regress to the first. This system was continued until all students were chosen. This did not allow the students any control over

their sponsor nor their fellow students, but the sponsors could avoid placing dating couples or troublesome cliques in the same group. Also, the sponsors were able to group a wider spectrum of personalities and facilitate more student interaction with those not in their social circle. This enhanced the opportunity for and effectiveness of the mentoring relationship, as students were more focused on the Faculty Family dynamics than on a specific person in the Faculty Family. After a few years of this system, however, the students complained about not having any friends in their Faculty Family group and thus did not want to attend Faculty Family meetings. This would affect the group not only in the manner of the students having poor attitudes at the meetings, but also students would skip the meetings whenever possible. This would at times leave only one or two students in the group, which made planning activities difficult since the sponsor could never be sure of their numbers.

This led to the development of the latest evolution of the Faculty Family selection system. For the past few years students have been able to sign up in groups of two or three of the same gender or choose to remain as a single. The sponsors then participate in the draft to choose either groups or singles until all of the students are placed. This allows for sponsor control of their Families, but also allows the students some control over their group. While the selection process for Faculty Families has evolved many times and will undoubtedly continue to do so, the main objective has remained solid and strong. Faculty Families focus on providing family dynamics for the students as they are away from home, and allow for the development of mentoring relationships during a time when youth are searching for direction and support.

The Survey

For the purpose of this research, four surveys were developed (see appendix 3-7) to determine the opinions of both students and sponsors on a number of aspects of the Faculty Family program. One survey for sponsors and one survey for students were initially completed in September 2009 after the Faculty Family groups had been chosen but before they had been given a chance to meet. A similar survey for each group was again completed in late May 2010 after the Faculty Family group's final meeting. This allowed for the expression of sponsors' and students' hopes and expectations of the program before beginning as well as allowing them to express their disappointments or satisfaction with the reality after experiencing the program over the course of the school year. Please note that not all questions on the surveys will be addressed, as some received such a variety of answers that they could not be adequately addressed and seemed to point toward no obvious conclusions. These questions were therefore considered superfluous for the purpose of this study.

The initial question on the survey addressed the issue of time already spent in a Faculty Family program with answers ranging from fourteen years to no time at all. There was a great variety in the answers from faculty members. The students naturally ranged from being new to the program to having already been in the program for three years.

The second question addressed how many times a month the individual would like the Families to meet. The sponsors seemed to be split down the middle with half of them preferring once a month and the other half preferring once a week. This was apparent before the school year even began as the faculty discussed scheduling the

meeting dates into the school calendar. Since there was such a diversion of opinion, the faculty decided to schedule a meeting once a month but leave the option of meeting more often open to the sponsors who wished to do so. This seemed to appease everyone. The students' answers averaged about three times a month, but of course it must also be remembered that the students do not plan for nor provide supplies for the meetings and hence invest much less effort and resources. There was no obvious correlation between how long an individual had been with the faculty family program and how many times they would like to meet. The ending survey revealed that Faculty Families met an average of once a month, regardless of the number of times they had hoped to meet. This seems to indicate that even the best of intentions are not realized unless they are planned. As the saying goes, "the best laid plans of mice and men often go awry." If a priority only exists in the abstraction of desire and never reaches the reality of planning, then it has very little chance of actually occurring. It seems especially easy to overlook additional meeting times when the students seem to be adjusting well and managing their studies. There seems to be no need for further intervention beyond the minimum. However, unless the foundation is laid while students are doing well, they will not turn to their sponsor when something goes wrong. It is necessary to build that trust and openness when the opportunity is available in order to capitalize on it when it is most needed. As stated earlier, this would ideally involve contact of some form at least once a week to keep the communication lines open.

The next four questions required a rating of benefit on a scale of 1-10 with 1 representing a negative experience, 5 representing no benefit, and 10 representing a great benefit. The areas of focus were educational, emotional, spiritual, and social. The

educational focus of the Faculty Family program scored the weakest amongst both sponsors and students. The sponsors averaged a score of 6.58 in the initial survey and 6.69 in the final survey, whereas the students averaged a score of 7.33 initially and 6.61 in the final survey. Thus the students had a higher expectancy of academic focus than actually occurred. The faculty did not highly rank academic values as a main concentration in the program, which may explain the lack of such an emphasis. A few years ago the sponsors were all faculty members and they were in charge of handing out grades to their groups and then discussing areas of weakness and ways to address those needs. Also a single school day had been set aside for the express purpose of Faculty Family field trips, increasing the academic focus of the program. However, during the 2009-2010 school term, neither of these occurred. This seems to imply that when the faculty pulled out the educational aspects of the program, they expected to not have a big impact in that area and it became a self-fulfilling prophecy.

The emotional focus of the Faculty Family program scored much stronger than the educational focus. The sponsors averaged a score of 8.25 in the initial survey and 8.33 in the final survey. While these numbers are very close, they do signify a slight increase. This seems to indicate that after having spent time with the students, the sponsors realized the emotional bonds that can be formed through this program. However, the students averaged a score of 7.64 in the initial survey and only 7.52 in the final survey. This seems to indicate that while the sponsors felt a stronger emotional bond than they had expected, they still were not quite reaching the students at the level the students desired.

The spiritual focus of the program scored very well among the sponsors,

averaging a score of 8.29 in the initial survey and 8.00 in the final survey. It is apparent that sponsors consider the spiritual factor to be one of the main focal points of the program, which is only reasonable as they have chosen careers in the ministry instead of choosing to work at public or non-denominational high schools. By contrast, however, students averaged a score of only 7.56 both initially and in the final survey placing the spiritual focus as their third priority of only four categories.

The social focus of the program scored the highest of all four sections, indicating that the general conception of the program's main objective is to increase the social opportunities on campus. The sponsored averaged a score of 9.08 in the initial survey and 8.50 in the final survey, whereas students averaged a score of 8.64 in the initial survey and 8.46 in the final survey. This drop in the sponsor's score can perhaps be partly explained by the difficulties in planning the monthly meetings and the struggles associated with arranging one's schedule to accommodate the event. Often when an individual hosts a social gathering, they are more involved in keeping the activities organized and moving along than actually being part of the activities and engaging in the social atmosphere. The students drop in score is most likely explained in part by a previous question addressing how often the students would like the Faculty Families to meet, to which the answer averaged three times a month. It was previously established that Faculty Families only met on average once a month, and hence the students did not glean as much socializing from the program as they had hoped. However, according to faculty the program did provide a launching point for mentoring relationships with specific students. So while the entire faculty family did not benefit as much as possible from the program, a number of individual students did in fact develop a mentee

relationship with their faculty family sponsor which included time spent together outside of the monthly meetings.

The Sponsors

The remainder of the survey presented open-ended questions allowing for short answer responses. In an effort to retain clarity the sponsors' reactions will be discussed first, followed by those of the students, and then a comparison will be drawn between the Faculty Family groups. It is important before beginning, however, to point out that most aspects of life deal with tangible results. Budget outlines, medical tests, and auto maintenance are all goal-oriented, with the process being carefully planned in order to reach a desired end. This is not the case, however, with people. While the process can at times be chosen for specific end results, the end results do not always reflect the process. The experiences, emotions and free will choices of the individual can thwart the good intentions of the process through no fault of the process itself. Hence when interpreting the results of the survey, it is more important to consider the reasoning behind the results more than the results themselves in considering the effectiveness of the Faculty Family program and its present processes.

The first question in this section of the survey addresses the motivations of the sponsors in joining the Faculty Family program, as involvement in the program is entirely voluntary. A few sponsors who were also faculty members replied that involvement was expected of them. This seems to imply that they perceived an underlying current of expectation despite the fact that they were given the option of whether or not to participate. The potential danger of this perception and consequential participation in spite of a lack of desire lies in the potential for students to pick up on the reluctance of

the faculty and to respond in kind. On the other hand, nearly half of the sponsors stated their motivation for participating stemmed from the opportunity to have fun with the students. One sponsor stated their reason was to "Enjoy time getting to know the students." While having fun and getting to know the students is very important, it is also preferable to develop the relationship beyond this enjoyment in order to effectively mentor. The last portion of the sponsors, which consisted of nearly half of those surveyed, viewed the Faculty Family program as an opportunity to mentor the students and make a difference in the lives of youth. In fact, one sponsor mentioned that they had chosen to participate in the program because of the mentoring relationship they had experienced through a similar program when they themselves were a younger. This reiterates the earlier observation that mentees often mentor others later in life.

The second question in this section addressed the aspects of the program that excited the sponsors. The most common response was simply getting to know the students better on a one-to-one basis. This even extended to sponsors who had joined the program out of a sense of obligation instead of personal desire. Usually faculty find themselves supervising larger groups of students and do not often have the chance to spend time with smaller groups or even individuals in a capacity other than teacher or chaperone. This program, however, allows the students to see their teachers as real people and connect with them instead of simply viewing them as people in authority. The church members who volunteered to sponsor a Faculty Family appreciated the opportunity to spend quality time with the youth, as their only other interactions are during the worship service. The other aspect that excited the sponsors was the community service opportunity. Each year the academy holds a community service day

in lieu of the normal classroom schedule, and students are grouped according to their Faculty Families. This provided a wonderful mentoring opportunity as students witnessed the altruistic service of their sponsors and learned the value of sacrificing for the sake of another. Many sponsors organized their Families to help with other community service opportunities on a voluntary basis, such as preparing Operation Christmas Child boxes for shipping or shoveling snow from the walkways of neighbors.

The third question addressed the aspects of the program which concerned the sponsors. These concerns mainly fell into the three categories of students' reactions, lack of time and confusion concerning the program's major goals. It was stated that "some students seem excited to be a part of this program whereas others may feel like this is just another requirement at MWA." Having students in the group who do not wish to be there can be detrimental to the effectiveness of the program for students who do wish to be involved. They would not allow for serious conversations to occur and hence would not allow for true mentoring relationships to develop. This attitude of not wanting to be involved also dampens the enthusiasm of the sponsor, as the sponsors sacrifice previous leisure time to invest in students who perhaps could not care less. Thus the students that would want to be there sort of get thrown out with the bath water as the sponsors wonder if the program is worth their effort.

Another concern was the factor of time. Life for faculty who choose the boarding academy setting is quite harried most of the year. Not only do most faculty teach five-eight classes, but they also supervise students one evening a week and an entire weekend once a month. Add to this schedule the necessary preparation time for classes, extra study help for individual students, and voluntary involvement in campus ministry

opportunities such as Bible studies and worships, and it paints a clear picture of a bulging schedule leaving very little time for personal pursuits or even relaxation activities. It is doubtful that church members who have chosen to sponsor a group have much more free time on their schedules, as those who volunteer tend to volunteer on many fronts. Hence the commitment to the Faculty Family program requires prioritizing, sacrifice, creativity and at times extensive planning. A few of the sponsors have addressed this issue by merging their responsibilities. For example, many have eaten their supervision meal at the cafeteria in the company of their Faculty Family group.

Another idea was to sign up the entire Faculty Family group as a single volleyball team during the Saturday night tournament on the weekend when the faculty was already on supervision. Planning is key to effective prioritizing. The last concern was that there seemed to be no plan or goals for the program. This was indeed true. Even though it was clearly stated at the start of the program for the 2009-2010 school term that the ultimate goal was to mentor the youth, the manner in which this was to be accomplished was for the most part left up to the individual sponsor to decide, along with their own personal goals and ways of achieving them. Sponsors received very little support in any aspect of the program except as the monthly meetings were scheduled into the school calendar by the faculty as a whole at the beginning of the year. It seems that sponsors could have benefitted from more information on the art of mentoring, as well as specific examples of how to accomplish effective mentoring, how to handle those who do not wish to mentor while not allowing their influence to affect others, and how to measure the effectiveness of activities aimed at enhancing mentoring opportunities. While these areas were addressed in the seminar presented before the program began, perhaps faculty would

have benefitted from more instruction later in the year as they were faced with specific challenges.

The fourth question addressed the sponsors' self-assessed spiritual health, which averaged a score of 8.4 on the initial survey. Thus they see themselves as spiritually thriving and enjoying a solid spiritual relationship with God. However, on the next question the sponsors rated the average health of their students at only 6.0 in the initial survey. This illustrates that the sponsors clearly perceived the students' need of a deeper and more vivacious relationship with God. It seems this knowledge would lead them to focus on this area of need with their students, especially in light of the previous section in the survey where the sponsors rated the spiritual aspect of the program to be second only to the social aspect.

Questions six and seven addressed the issue of mentoring, asking if the sponsor felt the program provided adequate opportunity for mentoring but also if the mentor was passive or purposeful in their mentoring relationships with the students. Naturally it became apparent that those who felt the program provided adequate opportunities to mentor were the same sponsors who purposefully sought opportunities to mentor. The opposite also appeared to be true. Another interesting parallel appeared in the survey, as those who passively mentored and felt the program did not provide adequate mentoring opportunities were often the very sponsors who had only joined the program from a sense of obligation instead of true personal desire. This reiterates the old saying that you can lead a horse to water but you can't make it drink. If a sponsor does not truly wish to participate in the program then their participation will result in very little benefit to the students. The same idea pertains to students who do not wish to participate and hence

resist any benefit. One sponsor stated this fact very well in the survey as they observed, "I believe mentoring is something that takes place when the person being mentored and the person mentoring choose each other." Thus it seems that requiring all students, and via peer pressure faculty as well, to participate in the program can damper the opportunities for developing effective mentoring relationships, and can even prevent the program from providing any benefit at all to the students who do voluntarily participate when their sponsors fail to develop their Faculty Families appropriately.

The final question of the survey asked what area the sponsors would most like to see the students grow. The unanimous response was that they would like to see their students grow spiritually. Hence activities which encourage spiritual growth should dominate the program, considering this is not only the sponsors' greatest wish for their students but is also an area in which they believe their students need growth and maturation as established in question five which poorly rated the sponsors' perception of the students' spiritual health. It must also be remembered that the faculty have chosen to teach in this demanding environment presumably from a heart-felt desire to lead youth to Christ, as other teaching environments would certainly demand less of their time but would also provide fewer opportunities for influencing the youth for Christ. Along the same vein, church members who have chosen to participate in the program are obviously voluntary members of the Seventh-day Adventist church and thus believe in its benefits for the individual and would by natural conclusion share this enthusiasm for Christ with their students. Hence the very nature of the sponsors will by default lend a strong spiritual focus to the Faculty Family program.

The final survey was conducted in May, after the final meeting of the Faculty

Family groups. Please note that the first question of how many times a month the Faculty Family actually met and the following four questions regarding the benefit of the Faculty Family program in the educational, emotional, spiritual, and social realms were addressed earlier in this chapter on page four. The next question asked the ways in which the sponsors were satisfied or dissatisfied with their experiences concerning the program throughout the year, with the following questions building on that concept, by asking which aspects of the program the sponsors felt were successful and which merited improvement. Overwhelmingly the sponsors answered that their highest satisfaction came from the relationships they had built with the students and the added time they were able to spend with them. One sponsor stated, "I've always loved faculty families—This year I came to love it even more because I realized how much the students loved it. They always asked me when they could come over again and were disappointed when it was moved or cancelled." One of the areas in which the sponsors were most dissatisfied was the amount of time allotted to the program. There were times when the administration would move the scheduled time or even cancel it altogether. Even early in the program it became clear that the administration did not fully support the program and felt that other events were more deserving of the time slots. This caused frustration not only among the students who enjoyed the program, but among sponsors who had carefully planned their meeting activities and were then forced to either forego the activity altogether if it had depended on community scheduling (such as watching a local theater production) or to rearrange their schedule to accommodate the new meeting time.

The next question on the final survey asked the sponsors to rate their spiritual health. Initially this question scored an average of 8.4, yet this time it dropped slightly to

8.1. Interestingly, the sponsors had initially rated the students' spiritual health at 6.0 yet in this final survey that number rose to 6.7. Perhaps both of these changes can be attributed to the same cause, and that is the emphasis placed on spiritual growth over the course of the school year. Ellen White says in *Steps to Christ*, "The closer you come to Jesus, the more faulty you will appear in your own eyes; for your vision will be clearer, and your imperfections will be seen in broad and distinct contrast to His perfect nature."¹ So the sponsors may have seen more clearly their own shortcomings in relation to Christ's character, yet at the same time witnessed a growth in the students' relationship with Christ and recognized it for the spiritual maturation they had hoped to encourage.

Question six asked sponsors if the program provided adequate opportunity for mentoring with most sponsors answering that it did not since not enough time was devoted to the program. The sponsors who responded that the program did provide adequate opportunity were those who had scheduled more frequent meetings than the faculty had incorporated into the school calendar. One sponsor described their mentoring efforts by saying, "I tried having a worship at every gathering, gave them encouraging notes when they were down, paid attention to how they did in class, helped them with school work or personal issues they felt comfortable sharing." This illustrates the potential for success in the program when opportunities are sought, capitalized upon, and followed up through a genuine desire to effectively mentor the students and to influence their lives for the better.

Question nine asked if sponsors felt their students were receptive, apathetic or resistant to their influence, with everyone answering that the students were receptive.

¹Ellen White, *Steps to Christ* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2009), 65.

This seems to indicate that the students as a whole welcomed the Faculty Family program and were not only respectful of their sponsors but also enjoyed the attention they received from them.

The final question addressed the area in which the sponsors witnessed the most student growth, with most responses pointing to social aspects of personal interactions. The students learned to spend time with those whom they may not have otherwise become better acquainted, to overlook the quirks of some in order to enjoy the time spent with others, and the valuable truth that everyone has something to offer even if it is necessary to look closely for this gift. These are valuable lessons not only for life in general, but more specifically for the workplace and for enhancing the unity of the body of Christ in the church setting.

The Students

This section will address the open-ended questions on the students' surveys, which at times were different than the questions asked of the sponsors. On the same scale of 1 to 10 used with the sponsors' surveys, students rated their own spiritual health on the September survey with an average score of 6.7. This number was higher than the 6.0 rating that the sponsors had given them. It becomes apparent, then, that students viewed themselves as more spiritually minded than the sponsors viewed them. It is also interesting to note that the students rated their spiritual health as 6.9 on the final survey, indicating a slim margin of maturation. On the other hand, the sponsors rated the students' spiritual health at 6.7 on the final survey, which remarkably is an exact reflection of the students' own rating at the beginning of the year. Hence it would seem to indicate that as the sponsors spent more time with the students and became better

acquainted with them, perhaps preconceptions concerning the students' spiritual health were replaced by personal witness.

The second question asked the students how they hoped to be mentored by their sponsors. While this question allowed for a great variety of responses, the vast majority of the answers fell into three fairly equally divided categories. The most common answer was "I don't know" with 29 responses, however it must also be remembered that many of the students were new to the academy and therefore new to the program. Although the faculty were prepared for the program through the initial seminar, this was not the case for the students as it was desirous to allow the faculty members, who volunteered their time and resources to the program, to create their own faculty family environment without the added pressure of expectations presented to the student body as a whole. The second most common answer to how students hoped to be mentored was in the spiritual arena with 27 responses, while 20 students responded with answers in the social arena. This is most interesting to note, as earlier in the ratings section it was established that the social aspect of the program was rated as being the area most benefitted by both the sponsors (9.08 social versus 8.29 spiritual) and the students (8.64 social versus 7.56 spiritual). Only four students responded that they were looking for educational mentoring, and one student responded that they did not wish to be mentored. This information would have been very helpful to their sponsors so they could focus their ministry on the needs of their students specifically. In fact, one sponsor had their students fill out a survey with questions such as their birthdays, favorite foods, favorite board games, favorite school subjects, and other such useful information.

The third question asked if the students felt the program provided opportunities

for mentoring with a large majority answering in the affirmative, a few stating somewhat, and three stating no. In May's surveys, most of the students again answered the question in the affirmative with a few again saying no, but the students who said no at the end were also the same students who had said no at the beginning. Most of the students clearly expected the program to provide a measure of mentoring, and felt as if they received that mentoring over the course of the year. The areas in which the students experienced the mentoring varied, however, with the main areas being education, career choices, social interaction and spirituality.

The fourth and fifth questions addressed areas of the program that excited or concerned the students. On the positive spectrum, activities and spending time away from the dorms were the most popular responses. As discussed in an earlier chapter dealing with generational characteristics, Millennials love to experience life in groups. This extends not only to extracurricular activities, but also to building mentoring relationships with adults. This characteristic suits the Faculty Family program very well, as group involvement is key to success. Sponsors are able to mentor their students as a group, enhancing their ability to meet the needs of their students in a way which individualism would not allow due to the simple constraints of time. As for students' concerns with the program, they seemed hesitant to be grouped with students whom they normally would not choose as friends. The sponsors see this as a growth opportunity as previously discussed, considering the many times in life when people are forced into working relationships with others regardless of their comfort level with those people. Another student concern was that some Faculty Family groups were not very active and hence not very interesting. For example, one Faculty Family might plan a bonfire

complete with roasting corn and marshmallows while one person leads the group in singing with guitar accompaniment. Yet another Faculty Family may sit around their sponsor's kitchen table and be left to their own conversations over chips and dip. One possible reason for this discrepancy could be as stated earlier, that some faculty members joined the program from a sense of obligation instead of personal desire.

The sixth question asked the students why they felt their sponsor had volunteered to participate in the program with the most common response being for the fun and enjoyment of it. Only eleven students felt it was for mentoring opportunities, and eight students felt it was due to obligation. This clearly shows that the mentoring aspect of the Faculty Family program needed more purposeful advertisement so the students would expect the focus and be open to building the relationship.

The next two questions asked if the students felt their sponsors had a healthy relationship with Jesus Christ and what role they expected spiritually to play in their Faculty Families. While all of the students believed that their faculty parents did in fact have a healthy relationship with Jesus Christ, only half of them believed that spirituality would play a major role in their Faculty Family. The other half did not know how spirituality would fit into the program. This raised concerns not only for the initial meetings which lay the foundation for the entire year, but also for the program in previous years. While it is possible that the new students could have been confused as to how spirituality would fit into the program that would account for only approximately one-fourth of the student body. Hence at least another one-fourth had previous experience with the program and had apparently not seen spirituality effectively incorporated. This seems to demonstrate that while students perceive their sponsors as

being spiritually healthy and hence valuing activities of a spiritual nature, not all of the sponsors were able to express their values in a way which led their students in the same path. In response to this lack of focus, perhaps the initial seminar should include more examples of ways to incorporate faith-building into faculty family meetings. It may also be beneficial for the faculty to receive more focused guidance through the program over the course of the year instead of left to their own devices unless guidance is sought.

The last question asked if the students viewed their sponsors as role models, poor models or old-fashioned and out-of-date in their morals. Only one student responded that their sponsor was a poor model, which indicates that the other students in that same Faculty Family did not agree with the description. Five students stated that their sponsor was old fashioned and out-of-date in their morals, but again these students were not in the same Faculty Family, meaning their cohorts had not agreed with their description either. The remaining students viewed their sponsors as role models, indicating a healthy view of the students for those in authority in general and for their sponsors more specifically.

The final survey was conducted in May, after the last meeting of the Faculty Family groups. Please note that the first question of how many times a month the Faculty Family actually met and the following four questions regarding the benefit of the Faculty Family program in the educational, emotional, spiritual, and social realms were addressed earlier in this chapter. The first question in the open-ended section of the student survey required a personal assessment of spiritual health and was addressed earlier in this section. The second question of this section asked how the program had improved or challenged the students' walk with Christ. Forty-seven of the seventy-four students were specific in their responses, stating things such as "It has improved because of how

spiritual my family was.” and “They made me open my eyes about some topics.” Most of the surveys indicated that the influence was more than simply having worship together but it was the sponsors’ lifestyle. Twenty-two of the students stated that the program had not impacted their walk with Christ, with some of the students indicating that it was hard to get to know their sponsors because their Faculty Family did not meet very often. This has been an issue in the program, as sponsors are not always available for the scheduled meeting times. This requires that their entire group be adopted for the night by another sponsor if possible or that the students themselves be separated and spread among other families if no sponsor is able to handle the double load. While it is understandable that a sponsor must at times miss a meeting now and again, when that same sponsor consistently plans alternate responsibilities that do not allow them to meet with their Faculty Family, it becomes clear to the students that they are not a priority. The last answer to this question came from 4 students who all stated that time spent with their group was more social than spiritual, and hence they did not feel they grew spiritually as a result of the program. While this could indicate a need for their sponsors to more purposely incorporate spirituality into their groups, it may also simply indicate the students themselves were not open to the spiritual aspects of the group and chose only to participate in the social realm.

When asked what aspect of the Faculty Family program they enjoyed the most, the students overwhelmingly stated just hanging out. The students simply enjoyed talking, playing games and being in the sponsors’ homes. This is important information for sponsors to understand, as often they stress about planning fun activities while the students simply enjoy being off campus and interacting with the sponsors and other

students. It is important to note, however, that planning activities is more necessary in the beginning of the year when students may still feel uncomfortable in that setting. As the year progresses and students relax, they are more able to provide their own entertainment. It is also important to understand that at no time is the sponsors' lack of involvement considered an asset. For example, while the students cited talking as one of the ways in which they enjoyed the program, I have been approached by some students who described with disappointment that their sponsor simply provided refreshments and left the room. While the sponsor may have felt that they were doing the students a favor by not infringing on time the students could spend with each other, it became clear to me by the students' reactions that this had not been their desire. It is perhaps helpful to point out that one aspect of the program which sponsors may have focused upon a great deal but which was not even mentioned by the students was the state of the sponsors' homes. Many sponsors spent a great deal of time cleaning their home in preparation for the meetings, but not a single student mentioned how much they enjoyed the cleanliness, décor or organization of their sponsors' homes—across the board they simply enjoyed being in the sponsors' home, period. It is important to note that the desire for a clean home often stems from a desire to make a good impression on company. However, the students should not be considered company and therefore should not be treated as such. Instead they are to be treated as family, and should be welcomed even when the house is not at its best. I myself have often found that when the house is not in perfect condition and I have not had time to prepare a fancy meal, that it is at those times when the students most open up. Also consider the condition of the students' homes, which more than likely is not consistently clean. It only stands to reason, then, that they would feel more

at home when their sponsors' homes are not immaculate.

When asked what aspect of the Faculty Family program they did not enjoy, most of the students made no reply except to say that they really enjoyed it. A few students complained that their Families did not meet often enough, which is actually a positive statement about their enjoyment of the program. One student complained that they were already friends with the other students in the Family and that they would have enjoyed making new friends, while another student complained that they were not friends with anyone else in the Family. It simply is not possible to satisfy everyone all of the time, but the survey showed that that vast majority of the students thoroughly enjoyed the program overall. Question five asked the students if they felt their sponsors enjoyed the Faculty Family meetings, which was overwhelming the case. In speaking to the faculty, I believe they truly did enjoy spending time with the students, even if carving out that block of time presented its own challenges.

Question six asked students if they felt the program had provided opportunities for mentoring. Most students answered yes. The few students that answered no were also the same students who had indicated on the initial survey that they were not expecting to be mentored over the course of the year. The following question asked in which ways the students felt their sponsors had mentored them, with the response reflecting the students' expectations according to the initial survey. These areas included education, career choices, social interaction and spirituality. Many of them felt that their sponsors were parent figures to them, and that their sponsors would welcome them at any time and would help them solve their problems or simply listen to them vent. They felt valued and understood by their sponsors, and truly felt as if their sponsor was indeed

family to them. This response indicates a level of success in the program as the students had developed a mentoring relationship with their sponsor which, in my personal experience, was likely to continue beyond the program's time frame. I still receive emails and phone calls from previous Faculty Family members as they update me on their happenings, ask for advice and prayer for their problems, and simply enjoy reconnecting.

Finally, all of the students felt that their sponsors enjoyed a healthy relationship with Jesus Christ even after spending a great deal of time with them over the course of the year. The students saw their sponsors express their spiritual convictions through worships and talks, making positive choices, and showing patience with the students. While at the beginning of the year one student had described their sponsor as a poor model and five students had described their sponsors as old fashioned and out-of-date in their morals, by the end of the year every student responded that their sponsor was a role model. One student summarized their sponsor's effective Christian witness by saying, "They live it. It's obvious."

The Family Groups

Overall there was little difference between the Faculty Family group responses. One of the interesting notes, however, was a change in the students' response to the question of how often they would like the Faculty Families to meet. Remember that in the initial survey half of the faculty wanted to meet once a month and half of the faculty wanted to meet once a week, while the students averaged a response of wanting to meet three times a week. Over two-thirds of the students who were sponsored by those wanting to meet only once a month responded on the final survey that they, too, would like to meet only once a month. This demonstrates how easily the attitude of the

sponsors can transfer to the students. It is also interesting that one sponsor who only wanted to meet once a month also felt that the program needed to be more focused and organized, which seems to be a contradiction. The sponsor wished to make a bigger impact but did not wish to invest a large portion of time or effort in doing so. It will not be a surprise to note that the faculty who felt obligated to participate in the program were also the ones who wanted the meetings to occur infrequently. In fact, the only sponsor to be described as a poor model by a student in the initial survey was a faculty member who stated they were only part of the program because they felt it was mandated.

The other area in which some interesting differences were noted between the Faculty Family groups was in the spiritual realm. Some sponsors rated their students at the same approximate spiritual health level as the students had rated themselves. One sponsor, however, rated their students' spiritual health as a 5 while the students rated themselves at an 8.3. Another sponsor felt that their students dropped from a 6.5 to a 4.0 over the course of the year, while the students rated themselves as having grown spiritually from a 5.6 to a 6.2. While these discrepancies may illustrate from the faculty viewpoint that "man looks on the outward appearance" (1 Sam 16:7) and must therefore be cautious in casting judgment on others, they may also illustrate a lack of understanding on the part of the students that their actions are a reflection of their spiritual health ("Anyone who loves Me will obey My teachings," John 14:23) and must be considered when evaluating one's own spiritual health.

These discrepancies may also demonstrate that the difference a mentor makes in the life of a youth is not always visible to the mentor at the time, even though the mentee has taken their influence to heart. Although not in the realm of mentoring, one

illustration of this concept can be seen in the life of Saul whose heart was touched at the death of Stephen. Ellen White writes that Stephen's death "resulted in the conviction of Saul, who could not efface from his memory the faith and constancy of the martyr, and the glory that had rested on his countenance,"² even though the fruits of this experience could not be seen until Saul met Jesus on the road to Damascus. Often the effects of one's witness appear much later in another's life and only in retrospect is the extent of the positive influence truly understood and appreciated.

Personal Experiences

Hiboombe started school at Maplewood as a very shy boy. He was very interested in basketball and dominated on the court, yet was often afraid to speak up in class. He joined my faculty family his junior year at Maplewood. At first he was still very shy but in the smaller group setting he started to come out of his shell a bit. The most progress he and I made in developing a mentoring relationship was not in a heart-to-heart discussion but in sharing experiences that we both enjoyed. For example, I discovered that Hibbombe's favorite professional basketball team was the L.A. Lakers who were scheduled to play the Minneapolis Timberwolves that year. I arranged for four tickets and invited Hiboombe and asked that he invite two friends of his choosing. The arena is an hour away from Maplewood so all the way there and back the three boys were stuck in a car with me. Thus, conversation grew naturally and as the time went on the conversation began to veer away from basketball and lead toward deeper subjects. After that time, Hiboombe would stop by my office from time to time to talk. I knew that a

²Ellen G. White, *Acts of the Apostles* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1997), 101.

connection was being made since he would sometimes seek me out to talk and I was not always having to seek him out.

The next semester another breakthrough occurred in an unlikely spot. Maplewood was having a Sunday school and had decided that we would split up into faculty families and each do field trips. This would allow for the students to experience museums or art galleries or the like without swarming the institution. Our faculty family decided to view an ice sculpture gallery in downtown Minneapolis followed by the science and nature museum. Once again this required a hour long trip and once again conversation started light heartedly and then went to deeper subjects. After the museum our faculty family ate a late lunch at Chuck E. Cheese's restaurant, an opportunity that would not have been financially feasible with a larger number of students. Some students in our faculty family had never before experienced this restaurant, and our entire group spent nearly three hours playing video games against each other, riding the virtual tour experience together, and re-energizing with pizza and soda pop while talking about the intricacies of academy life. Later that week Hiboombe came to me and asked if I thought he could be on the campus ministries team for the next year. This was a surprise to me and to most of the other faculty not only because of Hiboombe's intense shyness but also because he had not expressed interest in any type of leadership. He had a walk with God but it did not appear to be very strong at that point. Yet when he approached me I knew that he was growing and desired for that part of his life to grow even more. I was excited that he took that leap of faith.

The next year we continued to grow closer as he joined the campus ministries team and although he never really grew too much more outgoing, he made a huge impact

in the dorm and also in his Sabbath school class as he would teach others. His influence led other boys to dig more deeply into God's Word as well. Although Hiboombe is now enrolled in college, he still contacts me when he is struggling and whenever he comes into town he always makes sure to drop by. Our mentoring relationship continues to grow even though we don't see each other every day.

Faculty member LaVeta Ketchum shared with me one of her closest mentoring experiences through faculty families. Her mentoring grew out of controversy. A few years ago as stated earlier in this chapter, the students were able to pick their groups. Ms. Ketchum's group included freshman Jayme who was dating an upper classman also in the group. About halfway through the school year, the two broke up. This put strains on the faculty family meetings as they still had to attend the same group. But then something else happened that made it worse. Jayme's ex-boyfriend started dating another girl that was in the same faculty family. So whenever Jayme came to faculty family she not only had to deal with her ex-boyfriend but also her ex-boyfriend's girlfriend, as you can imagine this made for some very awkward situations. Jayme would often come to Ms. Ketchum's office and talk with her about it. Also, because Jayme liked math and Ms. Ketchum was the math teacher they often spent time together outside of faculty families. Through this tumultuous time at faculty families Jayme developed a deep relationship with Ms. Ketchum for the next four years. Their mentoring relationship grew to the point that when Jayme needed a place to stay for a summer job she chose to stay with Ms. Ketchum. Even today, years after she has left Maplewood, they still remain in contact and whenever she comes to town she always stays at Ms. Ketchum's home.

Maplewood alumnus Laura Cummings, now the school's development director,

shared her mentoring experience as a student ten years ago. Laura enjoyed the same faculty family parents the entire three years that she attended Maplewood. This longevity itself encouraged a strong mentoring relationship. She states that she felt very comfortable when going to their house and spending time with them whether it was having vespers or playing table games. Her relationship continued past Maplewood as her faculty parents also moved to Union College at the same time she did. Even today when she sees them she feels that she can talk to them straight from the heart and does not need to fill the conversation with niceties but can hold a very intimate conversation.

These three experiences exemplify the necessary elements for developing a healthy and effective mentoring relationship. The first story shows that often the most important conversations occur during mutually pleasurable experiences and not necessarily during scheduled discussion times. The second story shows that often dealing with the same controversy can lead to a deeper relationship as well as shared interests. The final story shows that relationships need time to develop and often the most beneficial relationships can take years to mature. These are just three examples of the difference that faculty families can make in a child's life and why the program is a necessary tool in shaping the new generation for the challenges that await them.

Suggestions and Conclusion

The area of greatest concern for the Faculty Family program is its lack of a mission statement. There is no clear understanding among sponsors as to the program's main focus and goals. Some consider the program to be an avenue for mentoring, others see it as enhancing social opportunities, and still others consider it simply one more way to entertain/supervise the students outside of the classroom. This is in part due to the lack

of clear leadership. Prior to my arrival at Maplewood Academy, the principal led the Faculty Family program, but the program did not include the mentoring aspects. The meetings were simply a time of fellowship in a small group setting. Upon my arrival I began the program's transformation to include the mentoring focus. However, the principal continued to direct the ultimate direction of the program which at times differed from my vision of the program's best interests. Hence the program suffered from two captains at the helm and its effectiveness suffered. The acknowledgement and empowering of one clear leader would ensure that all areas of the program worked in unison toward a common goal.

The Faculty Family program also suffers from the inclusion of faculty and students who would rather not participate. A reluctant sponsor cannot be effective, as they will not invest the time and energy necessary for success. A reluctant student can be disruptive and thwarting, not allowing other students the full benefit of the program. One possible solution to both the lack of a clearly defined mission and the inclusion of those who would rather not participate could be the addition of a new program in lieu of merging a mentoring focus into the Faculty Family program. Under this plan the original Faculty Family program would meet only once a semester and every student and faculty member would be required to participate. This would allow the faculty to easily fulfill their sense of obligation while only sacrificing one block of time per year while also requiring all students experience a taste of mentoring for a limited period of time. Simultaneously, a separate mentoring program would be available on a strictly voluntary basis to fulfill the campus' need for mentoring relationships. The program's main focus would be to cultivate deep and lasting mentoring relationships between sponsors and

students in a determined effort to provide spiritual surrogate parenting during a stage in life when youth most need parental influences but find themselves physically separated from their parents. Before joining the program sponsors would participate in a mentoring seminar to prepare them for the challenges and expectations of mentoring. The students also would attend a short informational session to dispel any misconceptions concerning the program and to impress upon them the purpose of participating. These mentoring families would have meetings scheduled into the school calendar once a month to coincide with an alternative activity on-campus, thus allowing non-participating faculty members their time off unless scheduled to supervise on-campus. This would also provide desirable activities for students who would rather not participate, but who would rather participate than be confined to their dorms. In addition, this alternative activity would also ensure that students who participated in the program did so from a true desire to experience the mentoring relationship, as participation would require they sacrifice an on-campus activity once a month.

The current Faculty Family program also would have benefitted from a seminar directed toward students very similar to the seminar presented to the faculty before the start of the school year. This seminar would provide an overview of mentoring in general to aid students in their development of expectations for the program and would ideally encourage their voluntary participation. The campus would also benefit from a separate seminar addressing peer-to-peer mentoring to empower upper classmen in intentional mentoring of the lower classmen. Modeling already occurs between the older and younger students and could be harnessed to increase the overall health of the student body while also emphasizing to the older students the manner in which their behavior

either purposely or unwittingly affects those around them.

Another failing of the present Faculty Family program is the inconsistency of both the sponsors and the students in meeting their obligation of simply being present for the meetings. When sponsors fail to host their Faculty Family, it sends the message to the students that they are not valued and hence they are not prioritized. When students fail to attend their meetings, sponsors are left with foiled plans, spoiled food and discouraged hearts. In response to this failure, it would be helpful to consider releasing the sponsors and students who do not wish to fully participate in the mentoring program. Students who choose to skip a monthly meeting for an avoidable reason would meet with their sponsor, and their level of devotion to the program would be reconsidered. In the same respect, if a sponsor was unable to host their mentoring group for any avoidable reason, they would be asked to resign and the students would be assigned to a more devoted sponsor. However, negative reinforcement alone is not constructive. The program must also include positive reinforcement to encourage the faculty to persevere with the process. Monthly meetings between the program director and the mentors either on a group level or individually would allow the airing of frustrations, abstract problem solving, and reinforcement of the practical steps to effective mentoring. This would also allow for program growth through input from those involved. This type of program would, I believe, help develop the army of youth that Ellen White talks about in the book *education*, "With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Savior might be carried to the whole world!"³ This army must be rightly trained, however, and who is better able to

³Ellen White, *Education* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1985), 271.

accomplish such a task than those trained to train? Christian teachers/administrators and dedicated church members must unite in a concerted effort to ready the youth for the high calling of God.

Mentoring is a sobering responsibility and an awe-inspiring opportunity. Now is the time to learn the methods of effective mentoring and to incorporate those methods into your own life. Now is the time to pray for the Lord to lead you to a youth who needs your intervention and to be diligent in following His will. Now is the time to act upon the passion the Lord has instilled in your heart for the hurting youth of today. Now is the time to decide. Now is the time to act. Now is the time to mentor.

Appendix 1

The Clash of Values

Values in...	Builders	Boomers	Xers	Millennials
Mother	Homemaker Mother	Working Mother	Single Mother	Single Mother/Single Father
Family	Close Family	Dispersed Family	Latchkey Kids	Comfortable with Looser Family Structure
Marriage Patterns	Married Once	Divorced/Remarried	Single Parent	Undetermined
Hair	Short Hair	Long Hair	Any Hair Style	Bleached/Spiked
Clothes	Formal	Casual	Bizarre	Anything Goes
Music	Big Band/Swing	Rock 'n' Roll	Alternative Rap	Ska/Swing (Very Diverse)
Money	Save It Now	Buy It Now	Want It Now	Get It Now (Online)
Purchasing	Purchasing With Cash	Purchasing With Credit Card	Struggling To Purchase	Purchase Online
Marketing	Ford Marketing Concept	GE Marketing Concept	Ignored Market	Interactive Global Market
High-Tech	Slide Rule	Calculator	Computer (Games)	Internet
Work Style	Team Work & Commitment to Work	Personal Fulfillment	Tentative/Divided Loyalty	Networking
War	Win a War (WW II Patriotism)	Why a War? (Vietnam War Demonstrations)	Watch a War (Desert Storm Live on TV)	Winless War (Iraq Conflict)
Morals	Puritan Ethics	Sensual	Cautious	Tolerant

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⁴Rick Hicks and Kathy Hicks, *Boomers, Xers, and Other Strangers* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1999), 290.

Appendix 2

Chart of Generations

Popular Names Generation	George and Dorothy The Veterans	Tom and Linda The Baby Boomers	Devon and Li Generation Xers	Brandon and Crystal The Nexters
Also known as...	Traditionalists GI's Mature WW II Generation The Silent Generation	Boomers	Xers Twenty-somethings Thirteeners Baby Busters Post-Boomers	Millennials Generation Y Generation Net Internet Generation
Birth Years	1922-1943	1943-1960	1960-1980	1980-2000
Defining Events and Trends	Patriotism Families The Great Depression WW II New Deal Korean War Golden Age of Radio Silver Screen Rise of labor unions	Prosperity Children in the spotlight Television Assassinations Vietnam Civil Rights movement Cold War Women's Liberation The Space Race	Watergate, Nixon resigns Latchkey kids Stagflation Single-parent homes MTV AIDS Computers Challenger disaster Fall of Berlin Wall Wall Street frenzy Persian Gulf	Computers Schoolyard violence Oklahoma city bombing It Takes a Village TV talk shows Multiculturalism Girls' movement McGwire and Sosa
Visible Members	Harry Belafonte George Bush Jimmy Carter Geraldine Ferraro Phil Donahue Sidney Poitier Lee Iacocca Gloria Steinem John Glenn	Bill Clinton Hillary Clinton David Letterman Oprah Winfrey Jane Pauley Bill Gates Rush Limbaugh P.J. O'Rourke Mick Jagger	George Stephanopoulos Douglas Coupland Kurt Cobain Jewel Brad Pitt Michael Jordan Matt Groening Michael Dell	Kerri Strug Macauley Culkin Chelsea Clinton Tara Lipinski LeAnn Rimes
Music of their Early Years	Swing Big Band Glenn Miller Duke Ellington Benny Goodman Tommy Dorsey Bing Crosby Kate Smith Ella Fitzgerald	Rock'n Roll Acid Rock Elvis The Beatles Rolling Stones Grateful Dead Beach Boys Jimi Hendrix Janis Joplin	Disco Rap Reggae Elton John Bruce Springsteen Tina Turner Bon Jovi Michael Jackson Guns'n Roses	Alternative Rap SKA Remix Jewel Puff Daddy Alanis Morissette Toni Braxton Will Smith Savage Garden

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⁵Ron Zemke, Claire Raines, and Bob Filipczak, *Generations at Work* (New York: AMA Publications, 2000), 24.

Appendix 3

Research Protocol

The purpose of this research is to determine the value of the faculty family program currently utilized by Maplewood Academy. The purpose of the faculty family program is to foster a surrogate parenting relationship between participating faculty members and dormitory students, meeting the spiritual and emotional needs created by the physical distance between the students and their parents. This mentorship has been extended to village students as well, recognizing that close physical proximity of parents does not guarantee the students' needs are being met. Therefore, the faculty family program seeks to mentor all Maplewood Academy students socially, emotionally, educationally and spiritually, creating a 'family bond' among fellow students as well as students and faculty that allow for the free expression of self and the opportunity for offering guidance in a non-threatening environment.

This survey will focus primarily on the spiritual aspect of the faculty family unit. I will endeavor to learn the quality of mentoring this program fosters, and determine how the frequency of meetings impacts the ability of the program to function as desired. My methodology will include the use of surveys at varying junctures of the school year, namely as the school year begins and as the school year draws to a close. To ensure anonymity, I have requested Maplewood Academy's developer/recruiter to assign a letter of the alphabet to each faculty family group, as well as a number to each faculty and student within that group. She will administer the surveys, destroying the information tying personal identification to the results upon completion, and then presenting the surveys to me so all respondents remain anonymous. I will utilize the corresponding letters and numbers to determine the differences and similarities among the varying faculty family units, investigating the benefits and pitfalls to determine methods to improve the program's value.

The subjects of this research will be both over eighteen and under eighteen years of age. Thus, I will secure permission from their parent or guardian during the registration process at Maplewood Academy. Informed consent will be requested of all participants, with the option to abstain from the research extended both verbally and in written form. Opting out of the research will not prohibit involvement in the faculty family program. The subjects will be recruited simply by participating in the faculty family program and agreeing to complete the surveys at the appropriate intervals. This wide involvement of the entire student body allows focus to transcend culture, gender and religious background, presenting a truer picture of the ability of the program to minister to all students regardless of their backgrounds. There will be no risks or discomforts associated with this research, as the surveys will be given collectively and anonymity will be preserved.

The benefits of this research are in the ultimate determination of the effectiveness of the faculty family program in fostering a mentoring relationship between Maplewood Academy students and faculty. The research will highlight areas of success, as well as failures or short-comings, providing guidance for improving the program and thus benefiting Maplewood Academy and other academies utilizing this program on their campuses.

Appendix 4

Faculty Survey September 2009

How many years have you been a part of the faculty family program?

How many times a month do you plan on spending time with your faculty family?

On a scale of 1-10, rate the following areas pertaining to how you feel the faculty family program benefits students. (1 = negative experience; 5 = not at all benefited; 10 = greatly benefited)

Educationally	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Emotionally	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Spiritually	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Socially	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Why have you chosen to participate in the faculty family program?

What aspects of the faculty family program excite you?

What aspects of the faculty family program concern you?

How would you rate your spiritual health? (1= nonexistent; 10= thriving)

How would you rate the average spiritual health of your students? (1 = nonexistent; 10 = thriving)

Do you feel the faculty family program provides adequate opportunity for mentoring?

Are you passive or purposeful in your mentoring relationship with students?

In what ways do you express your relationship with Christ and/or religious convictions in the faculty family setting?

Do you feel your students are mostly receptive, apathetic or resistant to your influence?

In what area would you most like to see your students grow?

Appendix 5

Faculty Survey May 2010

How many times a month did you spend with your faculty family?

On a scale of 1-10, rate the following areas pertaining to how you feel the faculty family program has benefited your students. (1 = negative experience; 5 = not at all benefited; 10 = greatly benefited)

Educationally	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

Emotionally	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
-------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

Spiritually	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
-------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

Socially	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
----------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

In what ways are you satisfied or dissatisfied with your experiences concerning the faculty family program this year?

What aspects of the faculty family program did you feel were successful?

What aspects of the faculty family program did feel merited improvement?

How would you rate your spiritual health? (1= nonexistent; 10= thriving)

How would you rate the average spiritual health of your students? (1 = nonexistent; 10 = thriving)

Do you feel the faculty family program provided adequate opportunity for mentoring?

Did you take a more passive or purposeful approach in your mentoring relationship with students?

In what ways did you express your relationship with Christ and/or religious convictions in the faculty family setting?

Did you feel your students were mostly receptive, apathetic or resistant to your influence?

In what area did you see the most student growth?

Appendix 6

Student Survey September 2009

How many years have you been a part of the faculty family program?

How long have you known your faculty parents?

How many times a month would you like to spend with your faculty parents?

On a scale of 1-10, rate the following areas pertaining to how you feel faculty families will benefit you.

(1 = bad experience; 5 = not at all benefited; 10 = greatly benefited)

Educationally	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

Emotionally	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
-------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

Spiritually	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
-------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

Socially	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
----------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

How would you rate your spiritual health? (1= nonexistent; 10= thriving)

In what ways do you hope to be mentored by your faculty parents?

Do you feel the faculty family program provides opportunity for mentoring?

What aspects of the faculty family program excite you?

What aspects of the faculty family program concern you?

Why do you feel your faculty parents have volunteered to participate in the program?

Do you feel your faculty parents have a healthy relationship with Jesus Christ?

What role do you expect spirituality to play in your faculty family?

Do you see your faculty parents as role models, poor models, or old fashioned and out of date in their morals?

Appendix 7

Student Survey May 2010

How many times a month did you spend with your faculty parents?

On a scale of 1-10, rate the following areas pertaining to how you feel faculty families have benefited you.

(1 = bad experience; 5 = not at all benefited; 10 = greatly benefited)

Educationally	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

Emotionally	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
-------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

Spiritually	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
-------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

Socially	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
----------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

How would you rate your spiritual health? (1= nonexistent; 10= thriving)

How has the faculty family program improved or challenged your walk with Christ?

What aspects of the faculty family program did you enjoy?

What aspects of the faculty family program did you not enjoy?

Do you feel your faculty parents enjoyed the gatherings?

Do you feel the faculty family program provided opportunity for mentoring?

In what ways have your faculty parents mentored you?

Do you feel your faculty parents have a healthy relationship with Jesus Christ?

How have your faculty parents expressed their religious convictions?

Do you see your faculty parents as role models, poor models, or old fashioned and out of date in their morals?

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